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# THE TIMES

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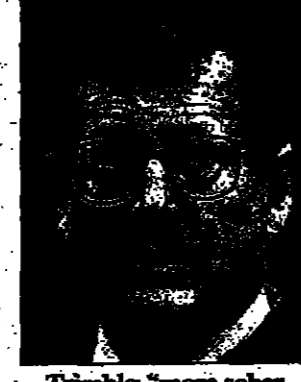
IN THE FREE 100-PAGE GLOSSY MAGAZINE

**metro**  
The Ice woman cometh

Sinn Fein participation threatened

## Ulster peace agonisingly close — Blair

By MAKIDIN FLETCHER, PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WATT



Trimble: "more sober appreciation" sought

SINN FEIN was set last night to rejoin the Northern Ireland peace talks after a meeting between Tony Blair and Gerry Adams ended with the Prime Minister claiming that a peace settlement was "agonisingly close".

But the return could be short-lived as there are signs that further evidence of senior IRA involvement in recent terrorist acts may emerge over the next two weeks. The Government confirmed yesterday that "local IRA elements" were involved in the murder of Kevin Conway, a 30-year-old Roman Catholic, in February.

While Mr Blair and senior ministers suggested that the finding would not prevent Sinn Fein returning to the talks because there was "no evidence it had been authorised by the IRA leadership", David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, said after meeting Mr Blair that the Government might find it difficult to continue ignoring the evidence piling up.

There was a clear indication that when the talks resume the Unionists will press for Sinn Fein's expulsion if the Government does not take action. Unionists believe that this week's mortar bomb attack in Armagh was sanctioned by a member of the IRA's army council who is based in South Armagh.

Mr Trimble went close to criticising Mr Blair for sounding too optimistic. "A more sober appreciation would be welcome," he said.

Unionist sources said that by "talking up" the prospects of success, the Prime Minister

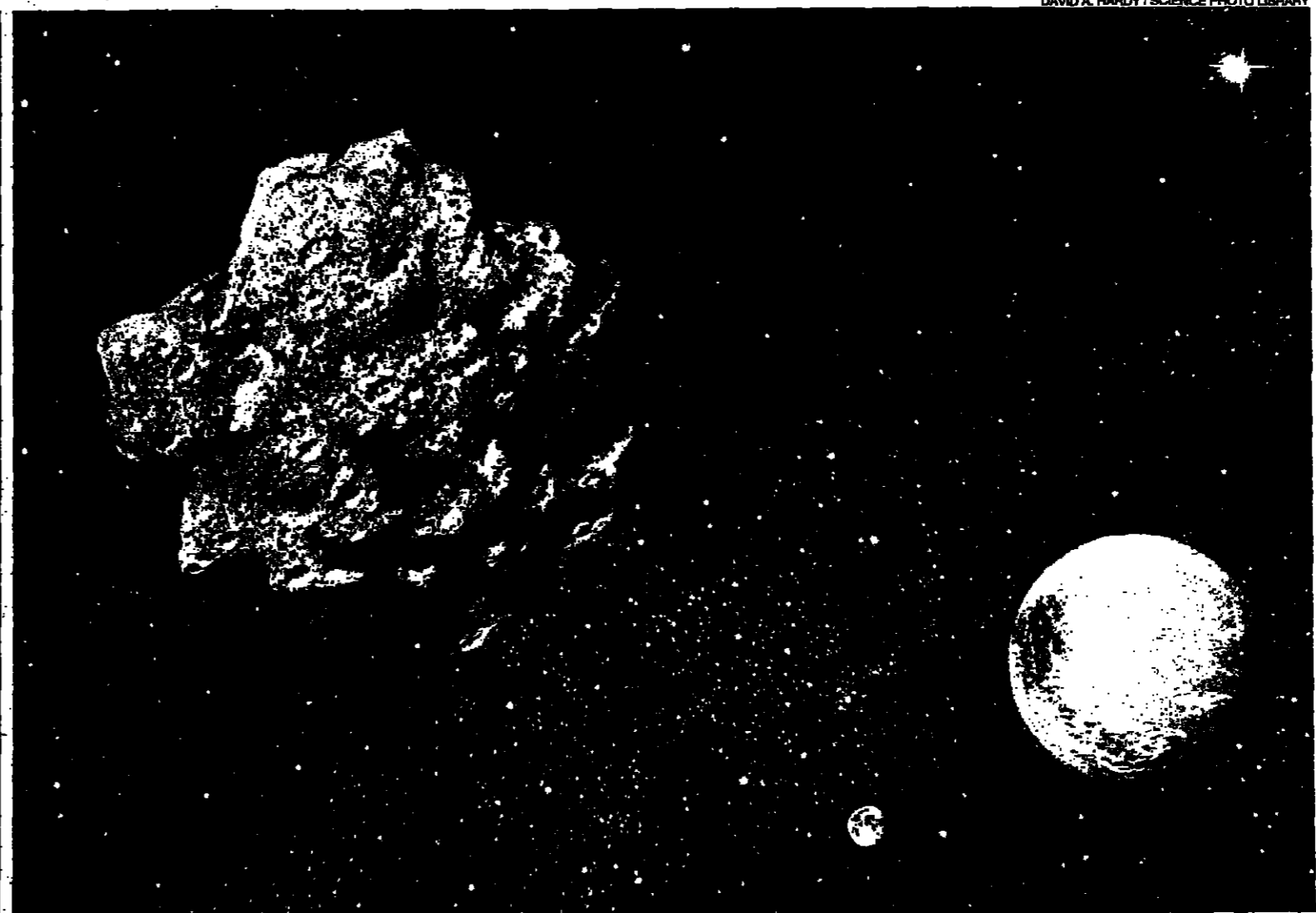
was fuelling fears among Protestants of a secret deal.

The Government's confirmation of IRA involvement in the Conway killing in a derelict farmhouse in Co Antrim emerged just hours after Mr Blair met Mr Adams. It was at that point that Mr Blair surprised participants by saying a "peace settlement was agonisingly close". Mr Adams left saying he wanted his party to return to the talks at the earliest possible opportunity, but had to consult colleagues first.

Sinn Fein was suspended for 17 days for two IRA members that predated the Conway killing, and was told that any further violence would mean its permanent expulsion. The party refused.

### IRA arms found in farmyard

An arms cache, including mortars and firearms, believed to belong to the IRA, was discovered on a remote farmyard near Baillicborough, Co Cavan, in the Irish Republic yesterday. The discovery was made by Garda investigating the 1996 shooting of an Irish policeman. A man was later charged with the murder of the officer.



Rushing towards destiny — an artist's impression of the mile-wide asteroid XFI1 which was sighted in December and is heading for Earth

## 6.30pm, 26 October, 2028: could this be the deadline for Armageddon?

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

APOCALYPSE could be just 30 years away, astronomers said yesterday. They have identified an asteroid a mile across on a near-collision course with Earth. It is by far the most alarming object yet identified in the search for Armageddon potential.

The asteroid, named 1997 XF11, was found on 6 December by Jim Scotti of the University of Arizona's Spacewatch Project. Observations by Japanese astronomers showed that the orbit of XF11 will bring it close to Earth — and as data from different observers accumulated it dawned on them just how close.

On October 26, 2028, at 6.30pm GMT, the calculations show, XF11 will pass within 30,000 miles of Earth — a hair's breadth in astronomical terms. The Moon is eight times further away.

The asteroid should move from northwest to southeast across the sky in a couple of hours, easily visible to the eye.

"The chance of an actual collision is small, but one is not actually out of the question," said Dr Brian Marsden, head of the office in Cambridge, Massachusetts which acts as a clearing house for astronomical discoveries. No odds on a collision can yet be attempted because the calculations are based on only 88 days of observing XF11, too few to know with sufficient precision



what its orbit is. In the next few months observations will continue, and be renewed as XF11 makes close approaches in 2000 and 2002. Astronomers will also be scanning old pictures taken in 1930, 1983, 1976, 1971, and 1957, years when XF11 must have passed by undetected. If any of these show a clear image in the right place, it will help to refine the asteroid's orbit.

Any impact by an object this big would be catastrophic, but whether that would be continental or global in scale is unclear. It would be smaller than the impact 65 million years ago which many scientists believe killed off the dinosaurs. That was made by an object six times larger.

Most astronomers believe that the human race would survive, unlike the dinosaurs. "The effect of a one-mile-wide object hitting the Earth would certainly be catastrophic on a global scale," said Dr Benny Peiser of Liverpool's John Moores University. "It would not necessarily lead to the extinction of animals or humans but it would have a tremendous environmental impact. If it hit one of the oceans, which is likely, it would trigger tidal waves which would most certainly wipe out all the coastal regions in that part of the world."

"An enormous amount of soil and dust would be sent into the atmosphere which could trigger a cosmic winter lasting a prolonged time."

Dr Daniel Green, of the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, agreed. "It would be disastrous, and it would have significance globally," he said. "I don't know if it would be disastrous globally."

Staring at Apocalypse, page 5  
Leading article, page 23

## More child-sex offenders to go free

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

SIX dangerous paedophiles, similar to child killer Robert Oliver, are to be released from jail without supervision during the next two years, the Home Office has warned police.

A national strategy is needed to cope with the men, who are still a high-risk to children but cannot be detained because they have committed no new crimes, a Home Office conference on sex offenders heard yesterday.

The conference in London was told that when Oliver was released from prison in September for the manslaughter of teenager Jason Swift, killed by a gang of paedophiles after he captured and abused him, detectives watched helplessly as he visited a children's library and amusement arcades on Brighton's pier. De-

tective Chief Inspector George Smith told the conference at the Law Society that a detective approached Oliver and told him he was being watched.

Eventually, such was the media attention that Oliver was taken to Brighton police station, and moved out of the town. During the next four months the probation service went to extraordinary lengths to find some place to give him both immediate sanctuary and a long-term home.

Last month Oliver, 43, was moved to a private clinic in Milton Keynes, where it is costing £320 a day for him to be held as a voluntary patient and under 24-hour police guard. The cost of monitoring and housing Oliver since he left jail in September is more than £100,000.

Penny Buller, chief probation officer of East Sussex, said six "predatory violent paedophiles" similar to Oliver would be released soon from jails in England and Wales, as well as 144 inmates convicted of sex offences who are not so dangerous.

Child abusers sentenced before 1992 can be freed without being monitored by the probation service but have to notify police of their addresses and go on the sex offenders register. The law was then changed to allow for supervision.

Sidney Cook, convicted with Oliver for killing Jason, is due to leave jail unsupervised next month. "Cook and Oliver, at one stage, had the idea of living together when they were released. That may now change," Miss Buller said.

The dilemma facing local



Oliver: costs £320 a day as voluntary patient

## Princess is back home after stroke

Princess Margaret left the King Edward VII Hospital for Officers in London yesterday, two weeks after suffering a mild stroke in the Caribbean. Buckingham Palace said last night that the Princess was making steady progress and had returned home to Kensington Palace. She has cancelled all her engagements for the foreseeable future.

## Pension scandal costs may soar

Investment watchdogs said senior executives could be barred from working in financial services if their companies fail to meet new deadlines for resolving the pensions mis-selling scandal. The Financial Services Authority said the cost of settling the matter could be as much as £11 billion. Page 27

## Derbyshire inquiry to be reopened

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE most remarkable deep-sea exploration ever conducted shed light yesterday on one of this century's unsolved maritime mysteries.

Scientists investigating the sinking of the *MV Derbyshire*, in which 44 lives were lost, disclosed crucial evidence that pointed to a sequence of faults and unavoidable events leading to the disaster in 1980.

An investigation of the wreckage, 2½ miles under the surface of the Pacific, found that a small unsecured bow hatch, which allowed water into the bulk carrier, was a key cause. However, authors of the report said the ship was "ill-prepared to take on the rigours of typhoon seas" in which it sank off the Japanese coast and pointed to other contributory factors.

The £2.7million investigation, based on 135,000 photographs and hundreds of hours of video film, prompted John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, to announce a further inquiry into the disaster.

After the *Derbyshire* hit the typhoon it sank in minutes as water poured into cargo holds. Investigators said the force of seawater snapped one hatch in half "like a carrot".

Victims' relatives, who have long claimed that the sinking was due to structural defects, were disappointed that the investigation did not find evidence of such weaknesses.

Loose hatch, page 10

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# Lots of froth, but Budget beer giveaway unconfirmed

To stage a session of Questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Thursday before the Budget is rather like offering intending world-cruise passengers a half-hour go on the pedalos at Skegness first. The experience is unlikely to satisfy the ambitions aroused.

Treasury ministers are, of course, in purdah. Backbench MPs are in a frenzy. Maximum inquisitiveness is unleashed at the moment of minimum disclosure.

The result is frustration all round. We realise, of course,

that MPs are not expected to disclose a vested interest before they ask a parliamentary question. Indeed, were John Townend (C, Yorkshire E) to declare all his interests before each question, the House would sit all night.

It would be quite a mouthful for the poor man to have to remind us that, apart from being the chairman (unremunerated) of the Merchant Vintners' Company, Mr Townend is also a director of J Townend & Sons (Hull) Ltd (wine merchants and hoteliers) — whose associated

companies are: Willerby Manor Hotels Ltd; House of Townend Ltd; House of Townend (Northern) Ltd; Townend Catering Ltd; Hull Bonding Co Ltd, not trading; John William Turner Ltd., not trading; Townend Vintners Ltd., not trading.

Besides, Members on both sides may already know all this. It is a question, therefore, of good taste than of propriety to ask whether it was well-judged of Mr Townend yesterday to choose this pre-Budget moment to urge the Chancellor of the

Exchequer to cut excise duties. Mr T did not put it quite like this. Waiting until the Financial Secretary, Dawn Primarolo, had risen to answer the Rev Martin Smyth (IUP), who was concerned about contraband cigarettes, the Yorkshire MP raised a complaint about the growth of smuggling. He was alarmed at the danger that "organised crime" was now getting in on the act. Firearms had already been involved, he told us, in Dover.

Mr Townend's anxieties about organised crime and the use of firearms do him credit. The good citizens of Dover will be grateful as well as surprised that such concern for law and order in their town is being felt in

Bridlington, East Yorkshire. It took a moment's reflection to work out that Mr Townend's proposed solution to the problem of smuggling was not to catch the smugglers, but to undercut their trade by making sure rival supplies were available elsewhere at competitive prices.

This is not an argument Mr Townend has used of the drug trade.

And it took a further moment's reflection to understand that his plan for achieving what he called a "harmonisation" within the

EU entailed — in effect — a massive cut in British duties on wine and spirits. Or perhaps I do the MP a disservice. He may equally be arguing for a massive hike in alcohol taxes on the Continent.

Labour's Ian Davidson (Glasgow, Pollock) was more straightforward in his line of reasoning. He "demanded" "free beer for all the workers". Conscious of Madam Speaker's doubts as to whether (though the Question was about wealth distribution) free beer was really a matter for the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, Mr Davidson tried desperately to think of something that was — and came up with the idea that beer glasses ought to have pint-marking lines beneath their rims, so the workers would not be given short measure.

"Only that won't matter so much if the beer's free, I suppose," mused the philosophical Scot. This being Budget purdah week, Treasury ministers would neither confirm nor deny that free beer is to be made available in Pollock.



# No 10 issues 'no leaks, no lunch' rule to ministers

DOWNING STREET has appealed to ministers to stop leaking information to journalists over lunch amid fears that too many secrets are slipping out over the Chardonnay.

The warning comes after a spate of recent leaks which have distracted the Government's "message" of the week. It has been reinforced by Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, who last week upbraided Whitehall information chiefs for the scale of leaking in the Government. A similar plea has also been made to the team of special advisers who work for Cabinet ministers.

There was particular concern over reports that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, would provide extra cash for childcare in next week's Budget. Mr Blair was said to have been "seriously upset".

But there is also increasing irritation at No 10 that the presentation of strategy is being bounced off course.

Frustration has increased after the opening of the strategic communications unit which circulates a "theme of the week" paper to ministers and senior officials for use in briefing, speeches and media appearances.

One senior government

Tongues wagging as Chardonnay flows have been blamed for a bad press, reports Valerie Elliott

they enjoyed for a period after the election.

The "no leaks, no lunch" offensive coincides with a review and opinion survey of the central machine of Government being carried out by Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary. The aim is to strengthen the Cabinet Office to drive through the government agenda.

He has dispatched a small team from the Office of Public Service to conduct face-to-face interviews with other departmental officials on how the Cabinet Office "can better support departments in the formulation and implementation of policy".

While this may be an opportunity for ambitious mandarins to be territorial and to denigrate the work of the centre, many senior officials are being "generally helpful and friendly" to the scheme.

One senior Whitehall source said: "I think people are so genuinely mystified at what is happening at the centre they see the Cabinet Office as the people who can tell them what is going on. They see it has an important role to inform the rest of Government for the Prime Minister and to facilitate his wishes."

John Lloyd, page 22



At a Friends of Sinn Fein fundraising event in New York, Martin McGuinness meets Deidre McAliskey, whose sister Roisín has successfully challenged extradition from Britain to Germany on explosives charges

# Reynolds quits political life with bitterness

ALBERT REYNOLDS, the former Irish Prime Minister, is quitting politics after his failure to succeed Mary Robinson as President of Ireland.

Mr Reynolds, 65, who helped to broker the 1994 IRA ceasefire that led to the current peace process, said yesterday that he would not contest the next general election because he had nothing further to do in politics. "I have, been at the bottom and been at the top and there is nowhere left for me to go."

He suffered severe embarrassment last year when his Fianna Fail party dropped him as its presidential candidate. The party instead opted for Mary McAleese, the former Belfast law professor, who secured a landslide victory in the November election.

Mr Reynolds is bitter at the treatment meted out by his party during the presidential election and is now irritating colleagues by failing to appear for crucial debates and votes in the Irish parliament. He is spending much of his time setting up international business deals or working the international lecture circuit, talking about his role in the Northern Irish peace process to groups such as the Moonies.

A colourful character who began amassing personal wealth by organising Saturday night dances in village

halls, he succeeded Charles Haughey as Prime Minister in 1992. Mr Reynolds was forced to resign in ignominious circumstances after it was alleged in 1994 that he delayed exonerating the paedophile priest Brendan Smyth to Northern Ireland. Mr Reynolds, who sued *The Sunday Times* for libel in 1996 and was awarded £1 damages, denied the charges and allegations that he misled the Dail.

His decision to stand down to pursue international business interests will create difficulties for the minority government which yesterday lost two by-elections in Dublin and Limerick. This leaves the centre-right Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat coalition government two seats short of a majority.

Reynolds said he had nowhere left to go



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# Prey on a plate may save moor grouse

A BUFFET of dead white laboratory rats will be laid on for birds of prey living on Scotland's heather moorlands in an effort to protect grouse for sport (Shirley English writes).

It is hoped that the experiment in providing an alternative food source for hen harriers will reduce the number of grouse they take. If the trial is successful it could be introduced across Scotland to

help to protect the country's shrinking heather moorland and satiny landowners who claim birds of prey are wrecking the sport of grouse shooting.

The compromise deal was agreed by conservationists and landowners yesterday after five months of debate sparked by a five-year study published last October which blamed hen harriers and peregrines for a steep decline in grouse

numbers. The survey at Langholm, on the Duke of Buccleuch's estate in the Scottish Borders, looked at the effect of birds of prey on the grouse population between 1991-96. It was estimated that the protected hen harriers and peregrines ate around 30 per cent of adult breeding grouse and 37 per cent of chicks. The number of grouse for shooting was cut by half in a single season.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Radio 2 casts off cardigan**  
Radio 2 cast off the woolly cardigan of middle age yesterday by unveiling a new line-up of presenters to rival Radio 1. Mark Lamarr, 31, the slick-haired panellist on the BBC TV show *Shooting Stars*, is to host a new rock and roll show for the station. Jools Holland, former presenter of Channel 4's *The Tube*, and Neil Tennant, from the pop group the Pet Shop Boys, will also be hosting shows dedicated to modern music. Alan Whicker has a series of recalling interviews in his career, and Spike Milligan will be the subject of a special programme.

**Team effort**  
The Football Association has chosen *How Does it Feel (To be on Top of the World?)* as its official anthem for this summer's World Cup. It was written by Ian McCulloch, of Echo and the Bunnymen, and Johnny Marr.

**Booking a place**  
Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* and Graham Swift's *Last Orders* are on the ten-strong shortlist for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, the world's richest literary prize at £100,000.

**Reporter tribute**  
Tony Banks, the Sport Minister, will speak at a memorial dinner tonight at St Paul's, Stockton-on-Tees, to raise money for an arts award in memory of the *Times* journalist Kate Alderson, who died in a road accident in 1996.

# LONDON FOR LESS THIS SPRING

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# The heavenly host is fined for low-flying

### Helen Johnstone reports on the preacher whose idea for airborne sermon barely got off the ground

AN EVANGELIST had high hopes when he took to the heavens in a motorised paraglider. John Holme planned to host his own religious event, preaching to the people of Salisbury by megaphone. Instead, he found himself dodging an electrified fence, trees and bird tables as his idea barely got off the ground.

His height on his maiden flight was sometimes as low as 6ft, and astonished residents said he flew over so low they could see the look of horror on his face. There was not much opportunity for preaching, and his efforts put him out of favour with the Civil Aviation Authority.

The flight earned him a £1,050 fine and £250 costs when he appeared at Salisbury Magistrates' Court for flying too close to a populated area and straying into airspace over an airfield. It was the first case of its kind involving a foot-launched, powered flying machine.

Holme, 39, who had planned to circle above in a controlled manner, later joked: "I thought that maybe if they heard this voice booming out from the sky, they would think it was God." He plans to carry his message from



John Holme: hoped to preach by megaphone

ground level in future. The preacher, who is married with two children, works as a computer software sales manager.

He had been given the £8,000 "paraglider" — a paraglider powered by a 60cc engine, encased in a protective wire mesh, which is strapped to the back of the pilot — as a reward for generating sales of £500,000. The prize seemed perfect to spread the word of his church in the village of Coombe Bissett, Wiltshire, where he is an elder.

"I wanted to try to get through to kids on council estates and I needed something with some cred," he said. "I can't believe I've got a criminal record after this."

Richard Griffiths, for the prosecution, said the flight started with a quick prayer for courage: "That courage was very much needed because he found himself flying between houses on the nearby Castle Hill estate."

"He set off and seemed to be gaining height, but only at the same rate as the houses were climbing the hill. This caused him instantaneous fear. He was flying down the road with chimney pots above him."

One couple said they "could see the pilot's face so clearly

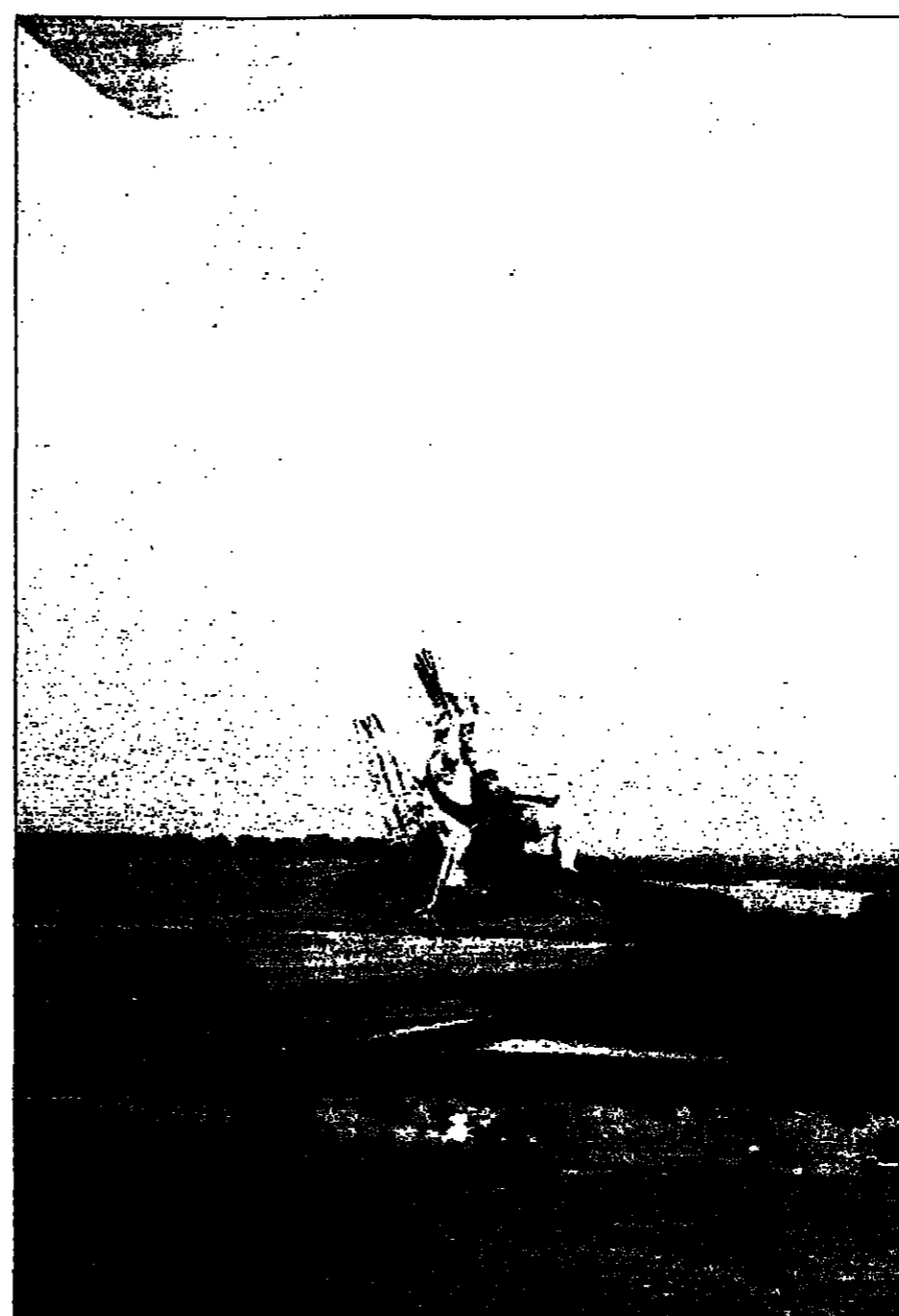
to myself. 'What now?' The real problems started when the wind got behind him and sent him at 30mph in the wrong direction towards trees. "I managed to clear the trees but saw the houses behind them and knew I was not high enough to get over the roofs."

"I made the decision to fly between the houses but did not know how to steer. I learned that in the following 15 minutes. Considering it was the first time I had flown, I think my performance was not too bad. I just chucked up the gardens, missing things by inches."

He estimated his maximum height at 500ft. His wife, Ann, heard the commotion from their home two miles away. While negotiating his way through the gardens, he says that he saw Heaven. He added: "I never thought I was going to die, but as a Christian I would not have been frightened of dying anyway."

He has since flown 30 miles from Winchester to Salisbury without incident, and is now hoping to get a private pilot's licence. The court heard that although Holme had not needed a licence or training to fly the paraglider, he had taken two training lessons and thought he was capable.

Chris Mason, a spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority, said: "The rules state that the aircraft shall not be flown closer than 500ft to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure except while it is landing."



In action: "Maybe if they heard voice from sky, they would think it was God"

# Medieval flasher banned from card

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

MONEY-MAKING plans to exploit a church carving of a medieval "flasher" have been vetoed by a parochial church council.

The 15th-century figure of a cheerful, well-endowed man, wearing only a shirt and hat, was discovered on an oak beam at All Saints' Church, Hereford and Worcester, during restoration.

The Rev Andrew Mottram, the priest-in-charge, included a mention in the church guidebook and trained a spotlight on the carving. But when he announced his plan to sell fibre casts and colour postcards of the carving to raise funds, the church council decided this was pushing back the bounds of good taste too far.

Jackie Mumford, church treasurer and mother of two boys, who voted against the postcard, said: "He's a well-endowed gentleman, lying on his back. He's looking at you through his legs and he is very excited, let's put it like that."

"It is fun, but to have a postcard would be exploitation purely for money's sake and I don't think that is what we are here for."

Mr Mottram, 44, said: "I think the carving could be quite a moneyspinner. It's the sort of thing people could buy because it is, in a sense, rude, but it's not totally pornographic, vulgar or top-shelf. It's medieval porn, so it's art."

# Cinema fans lose out as stars make quick exit

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

MOVIE fans, lured to the cinema by the promise of seeing their favourite stars dominating the big screen, are being severely shortchanged, it is claimed today.

Leading actors are making increasingly fleeting appearances in the movies they promote — with a star appearance lasting as little as six minutes. Among the worst culprits are Bob Hoskins, Robert de Niro and Glenn Close.

In a BBC consumer programme tonight, cinemagoers are warned that an actor's name being emblazoned on a film is not a guarantee that they will be seen of them.

The increasingly common condition is known in the industry as Short Appearance Syndrome. Film companies are being urged to state exactly how long stars will be seen in a movie.

The worst example found by BBC's *Weekend Watchdog* is *Michael* starring John Travolta and, supposedly, Bob Hoskins. In fact Hoskins appears for just six minutes in a 102-minute film.

In *Ice Storm* starring Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver, Ms Weaver is on screen under 18 minutes out of 112 minutes.

# Two face jail over vicious assault

By Terri Judd

A JUDGE criticised the slowness of the judicial process last night after his daughter was forced to take the stand following a vicious attack.

Emily Griffiths, the daughter of Judge David Griffiths, had to have her teeth reconstructed after she was pushed to the ground while trying to save her boyfriend from a beating.

Yesterday, Floyd Thomas, 20, and Scott McLaren, 21, were told that they faced jail after being convicted of affray and assaulting George Hibidge. However, they were cleared of assaulting Miss Griffiths by magistrates at Chertsey, Surrey.

Judge Griffiths, who missed the jury's verdict because he was sitting at Southampton Crown Court, said he was satisfied with the verdict. He said: "She never saw who did it as she was pushed from behind."

But the judge criticised the speed of the judicial system, which meant that cases took months, even years, to reach court. "By the time matters get to court, witnesses have not as clear a memory of the events as they should. They also have to spend time waiting, uncertain of what will happen."

The court was told how Miss Griffiths, 20, and her boyfriend were the victims of an unprovoked attack last September. She explained how she thought Mr Hibidge, 21, was about to die as fists rained down on him. As she tried to come to his aid, she was knocked to the ground and broke three teeth. Miss Griffiths, a student from Andover, Hampshire, needed emergency dental treatment.

McLaren, of Andover, admitted assaulting Mr Hibidge and also pleaded guilty to a charge of affray. Thomas, of Andover, denied the charges.



Robert de Niro, left, used briefly by Sylvester Stallone

# Replace your Compaq servers without lifting a finger.

(Well, just one perhaps.)

# How having a pet can help you live happily ever after

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

COUPLES who own pets are more happily married, have closer relationships and respond better to stress than those who do not, according to a report to a conference in Florida yesterday.

Karen Allen, of the University of New York at Buffalo, has studied 100 couples, 50 of whom own cats or dogs, and 50 who do not. They answered questionnaires to measure how close their relationships were, and filled in diaries to assess how varied their social lives were.

Dr Allen also measured stress response by hooking up the couples to heart and blood-pressure monitors, and then introducing topics of conversation identified from the questionnaires as potential sources of conflict.

She found that pet-owners are a sociable group, making more contacts with outsiders than non pet-owners. "We don't know specifically why this is so," Dr Allen, whose research was partly sponsored by a petfood manufacturer, told the American Psychosomatic Society.

"Pet-owners may be the kind of people who inherently seek out more social contact. On the other hand, there may be something in the relationship between people and pets that enhances social interaction. It's also possible that for some people, the contact with a pet provides the same healthful psychological and physiological benefits as human contact."

She found that pet-owners have lower blood pressure than non pet-owners, with an average systolic pressure of 115, against 135. "When stressed, the pet-owners' blood pressure rose to a maximum of 125, then fell quickly to normal. Among those without a pet, pressure rose to 160 and stayed there for five to ten minutes."

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# Asteroid leaves us staring at apocalypse

### Astronomers should know in four years if Earth faces a direct hit - and if we need spacecraft to avert catastrophe, writes Nigel Hawkes

ASTRONOMERS will know for certain in about four years if the asteroid 1997 XF11 really has Earth's name on it. By the end of October 2002, it will have circled the Sun twice in two years, time enough to get an exact orbit and to forecast how close it will come. First estimates suggest it could pass as close as 30,000 miles - an eighth of the distance to the Moon - but the margin of error is plus or minus 180,000 miles. That means it could be a direct hit on Earth or, more likely, it could pass close enough to make a brilliant sight in the evening sky on October 26, 2002. The closest approach will be around 6.30pm GMT.

Thirty years is plenty of time to plan countermeasures. The US space agency Nasa has already made plans to send a spacecraft to intercept two asteroids, in the first rehearsal of the mission that may one day be necessary to save Earth.

The evidence is that asteroids are tightly held together by gravity. They are not solid masses of rock, but lumps of materials easily prised apart by an impact or by exploding a bomb close to them.

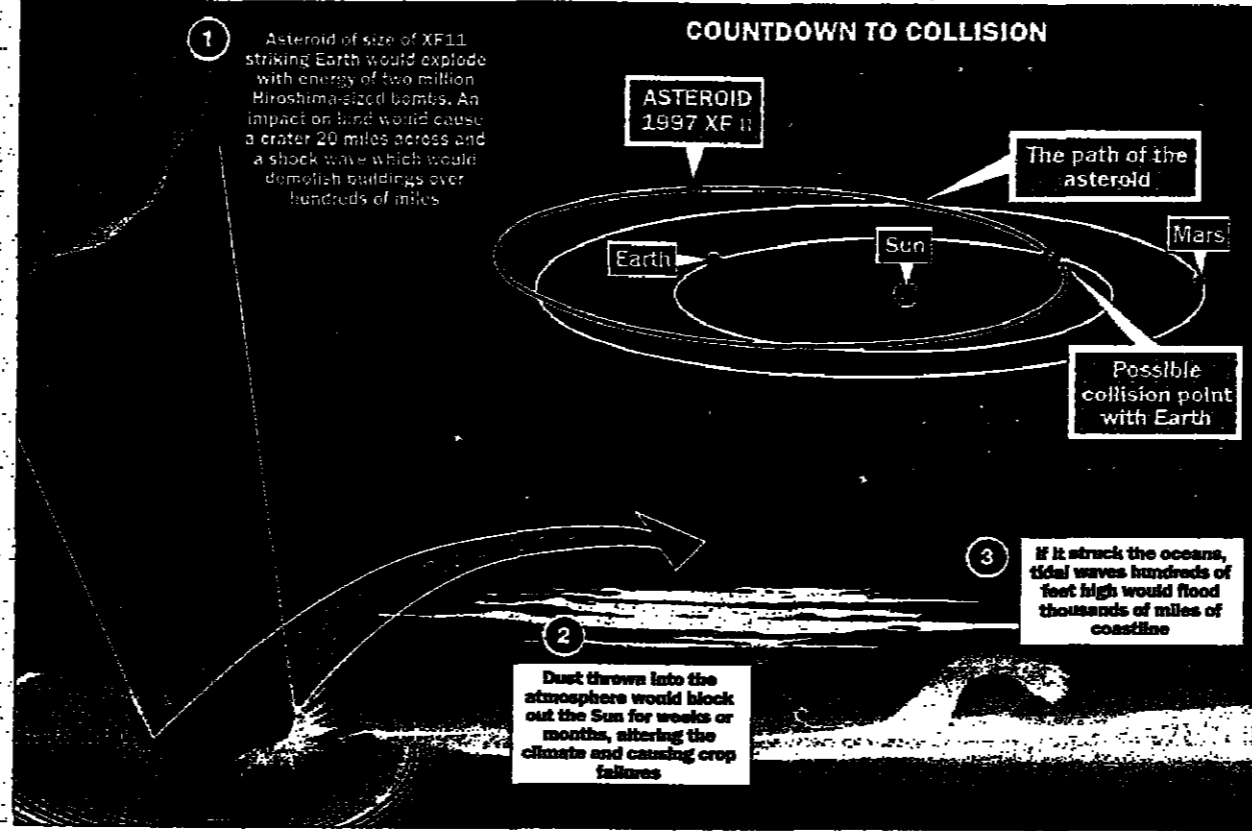
This has both advantages and disadvantages. A close approach, followed by the

detonation of a bomb, might easily break the asteroid into pieces, deflecting them just enough to ensure that they pass by harmlessly. But if the asteroid fragments, it may be difficult to predict exactly where each piece would go. That could increase the risks.

The Nasa mission is not designed to destroy asteroids, but to investigate them. A spacecraft, *Clementine II*, would first rendezvous with the asteroid 1996 JA, half a mile wide and on an orbit that crosses the Earth's. It will then pass on to a second asteroid, Toutatis, which is two miles across and on a similar orbit. These are just two of 109 classified as "potentially hazardous asteroids" or PHAs, because their orbits overlap with ours and they are of a size sufficient to result in widespread or even global damage if they hit.

The plan is to release instruments which will take measurements and pictures before slamming into the asteroids at 45,000mph. The impacts will be insufficient to destroy the asteroids, but should provide an idea of their strength and composition.

Asteroid 1997 XF11 will make two close passes, in 2000 and 2002. On October 31, 2002, it will pass within six



million miles of Earth, close enough for detailed examination. The odds are that this will show it is not on a direct collision course. If it is, and it is not intercepted, the results would certainly be catastrophic.

The last major impact of an asteroid or comet occurred on June 30, 1908, when an object less than 100 yards across smashed into a forest near the River Tunguska in Siberia. Nobody is known to have died in the thinly populated area,

but trees were flattened over 900 square miles. Had the impact been on a city, hundreds of thousands might have died.

Asteroid 1997 XF11 is judged, on the basis of its brightness, to be about a mile in diameter, dwarfing the Tunguska object, but only about a sixth of the size of the one believed responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. An impact would have devastating effects. If it struck an

ocean, waves hundreds of feet high would sweep outwards, swamping coastal cities and sweeping them away.

An impact on land would create a crater 20 miles wide and a huge blast estimated at about 320,000 megatons of TNT - or two million Hiroshima-sized atom bombs. Vast amounts of dust and debris would be thrown into the atmosphere, blocking out sunlight for months. The effects on agriculture would be huge. The impact would certainly

have global effects, but would not be sufficient to cause a global catastrophe. Jack Hills, an asteroid specialist at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, said the danger was real.

"This is the first really big one to pass this close, the most dangerous one we've found so far. It scares me. It really does. An object this big hitting the Earth has the potential of killing many, many people."

Leading article, page 23

## Prophets of doom need to get it right only once

BY ROBIN YOUNG

IT DOES not pay to get too excited about any prediction of the end of the world because the chances are that it will be wrong.

James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, calculated that the world was scheduled to end on October 22, 1996, while French astrologers predicted a firm engagement with oblivion for February 2, 1993.

We also managed to duck an apocalyptic world war envisioned by Aleister Crowley, a black magician, as certain for the world in April 1977: the Armageddon that Paco Rabanne, the couturier, predicted would begin in 1996; and the universal appointment with destiny for which William Miller, an American farmer, gathered 50,000 followers in 1844, having calculated from words and numbers in the Bible that the end would be October 22.

Nor were we adversely affected by the "cosmic explosion" that Sister Marie Gabriel, a Polish nun, advertised in *The Times* as the big event for July 16, 1994.

Belief in the imminent end of the world is as important a part of the American way of life as apple pie. The Pilgrim Fathers were convinced they were living in the "Last Days" and, ever since, America has been peppered with sects awaiting the final triumph of the forces of evil.

Occasionally they go off the rails and commit mass suicide in a fit of impatience. It has been calculated that eight million Americans are "end-timers" who believe that the second coming of Christ and the end of the world will occur in their lifetime (or, more precisely, just at the end of it).

The best news in this department came in November 1995 when leaders of five million Jehovah's Witnesses said that, having got it wrong so often, they would no longer try to predict Armageddon.

The latest asteroid threat is not news by any stretch. At any moment Steven Spielberg's latest Dreamworks production, based on just such a scenario, is going to hit Britain (or its cinema screens, at least). It stands in a long tradition of devastation movies such as *Asteroid*, *Meteor* and *When Worlds Collide*.

The passage last year of the comet Hale-Bopp, and the approach of the millennium, ensure that there will be many more such excitements. Of course, the doomsters need to get it right only once.

## Council leader accuses police chief of failure

THE leader of Manchester City Council has accused the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police of failing to combat "rampant lawlessness" in the city's clubland.

Richard Leese told David Wilnot that his officers seemed unable or unwilling to tackle the gangsters whose activities had reached crisis levels. In a letter, which was leaked to the media, Mr Leese demanded a meeting within seven days to tackle organised crime.

Manchester's clubland, for long the jewel of Britain's youth culture, has been in turmoil since October, when two young people were murdered in unrelated incidents outside city centre clubs on the same night. A hard core of professional gangsters is said to have infiltrated the clubs - terrorising DJs, promoters and owners - to sell drugs, or supply the bouncers.

Gangs are also said to roam between clubs, forcing entry,

Manchester force denies claim that lawlessness is winning, reports Russell Jenkins

Manchester's reputation for gangsterism has also been reinforced in recent weeks by shootings in Moss Side, notorious for drug dealing, culminating in the murder last week of Julian Wagaba, 18, caught in crossfire outside his home.

Mr Leese's letter to the Chief Constable is dated February 11. In it, he recalls a series of meetings in recent months between police officers, councillors and club and bar owners. However, he says: "Over this period the problems appear to have escalated, spreading to other areas of

business activity within the city centre. And now they are seriously undermining investor confidence so vital for the city's regeneration."

Mr Wilnot is out of the country, but Greater Manchester Police are furious that a letter, showing the council leader hectoring the Chief Constable, has been leaked. They say that the extent of the problem has been exaggerated. David McCrone, Assistant Chief Constable, called on licensees and club owners experiencing law and order problems to make themselves known to the police and emphasised that have been "numerous initiatives" in recent months.

He said: "Policing initiatives have proved fruitful, particularly the areas of improved intelligence and targeting of problem individuals and premises. We are working with the council, pub and club owners to tackle any crime-related problems."

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# Rise in under-age pregnancies is set to continue

THE number of under-age girls becoming pregnant has risen for three years in a row and is at the highest level in more than a decade, according to figures released yesterday.

The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that 8,800 girls under 16 became pregnant in 1996. This was more than in any year since 1985, when there were 9,406 under-age pregnancies.

The conception rate among under-age girls was 9.4 per 1,000, compared with the previous year's rate of 8.5 per 1,000. According to the figures, 52 per cent of the under-age pregnancies end in abortions.

The pregnancy figure seems set to climb even higher, according to research by the Brook Advisory Centres. This is because of continuing fear about the safety of contraceptive pills, after researchers claimed in 1995 that the Pill could cause thrombosis.

"The legacy of uncertainty over safety of the Pill is reflected in Brook figures for 1996, which showed a marked drop in the percentage of adults choosing the Pill of one third among under 16s and a quarter among those aged 16 to 19," the centres said.

The Family Planning Association also blamed the latest rise on the contraception pill scare and called for the speedy introduction of a national policy to guarantee good

## Alert on safety of the Pill led to nearly 9,000 conceptions in 1996, reports Ian Murray

advice for young people. Although the number of pregnancies is high, this is in part due to the fact that there are a higher number of girls in the under-age bracket than in the past. The highest conception rate among girls under 16 was 10.1 per 1,000 in 1990. It fell for three years to 7.243 in 1993, when the number began steadily rising.

There are wide regional differences, with the rates higher in inner-city areas and lower in country districts. In Southwark, Lewisham and Lambeth, the rate is 17.6 per 1,000, compared with 3.5 per cent in east Surrey.

The Government is looking at ways to tackle the number of under-age pregnancies. A national programme is expected to begin in May. One of the initiatives favoured by Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, is to encourage teenage boys to talk about the emotional aspects of relationships.

Focus groups involving young people, parents and teachers will be set up shortly.

The overall conception rate among women aged 15 to 44 has increased slightly between 1995 and 1996 from 74 to 76 per 1,000. In 1996, there were 816,000 conceptions in England and Wales — 3 per cent higher than in 1995, but 6 per cent lower than the peak in 1990.

The number of pregnancies leading to maternity rose by 2 per cent between 1995 and 1996 to 646,000 and the number leading to legal abortion rose by 9 per cent to 170,000.

Alan Maryon Davis, a consultant in public health in Lewisham, said that the area had always had one of the highest under-age pregnancy rates: "There are social problems and financial circumstances because many of these girls come from very large families and a lot of them are children of teenage mums".



Kirsty Carver: her car was found near Hull with the keys in the ignition

# Parents fear for safety of missing police worker

By PAUL WILKINSON

POLICE have launched a massive search for one of their employees who has been missing for more than a week after her car was found abandoned. As a helicopter joined tracker dogs and mounted police checking the area where Kirsty Carver's car was discovered with the keys in the ignition, her mother yesterday made a heartfelt appeal for her to get in touch.

Miss Carver, 22, a computer operator at Humberside Police headquarters in Hull, was last seen by a friend in the early hours of March 5. Her L-registered Toyota Celica was found later that day in a country lane outside the city.

At a press conference yesterday detectives admitted that they were baffled by her disappearance. They described her as a bubbly, popular character who appeared to have no personal problems.

Miss Carver's mother, Vanessa, 41, begged her daughter to make contact. She said: "Kirsty, whatever may be bothering you, we can sort it out. Please get in touch with

us. Don't be frightened to contact us, all we want is to know you are safe."

As her husband, Arthur, 42, put an arm around her shoulders, Mrs Carver went on: "Please come home and let us help you. You have done nothing wrong and we promise you, you are not in any trouble."

Detective Inspector Eddie Carrill, who is leading the search, said: "I am baffled. There is no sign of a struggle or blood in the car and she only took her handbag and purse, which contained a limited amount of cash, certainly no more than £10. She has not attempted to withdraw any money from her bank account and has not used her credit cards."

Miss Carver was last seen by a former colleague whom she had been visiting in Hull. She left his home at 1.45am, saying she intended to drive to Humberside Police headquarters. She never arrived and her car was found in Hags Lane, between Willerby and Cottingham, that morning.

# Tying the knot takes new twist

THE number of people in England and Wales choosing to get married in venues other than churches and register offices has increased fourfold, according to statistics published yesterday.

More than 2,000 premises were approved as alternative marriage venues in 1996-97. These included hotels, castles and country houses, football grounds, London Zoo, the battleship HMS Warrior in Portsmouth and the Dan yr Ogof caves near Swansea. According to the Office for National Statistics, 15,341 people married in approved premises in 1996-97, compared with 4,107 in 1995-96.

Such marriages have to be conducted by a superintendent registrar and the premises must be "seemly and dignified". Civil marriages cannot be conducted on a ship at sea, in a hot-air balloon or in a temporary structure such as a marquee. The largest number of marriages in approved premises took place in Kent, where there were 771. The next highest was Essex with 701

and Cheshire with 679. There were no marriages in approved premises in eleven areas including the City of London, Bromley, Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton.

The Office for National Statistics said that the figures also showed a decline in the total number of marriages from 284,000 in 1994-95 to 276,000 in 1996-97. There has also been a small decline in the number of register office marriages, from 149,000 in 1994-95 to 146,000 in 1996-97.

Religious weddings have declined from 135,000 to 114,000 in the same period. In Scotland, civil marriages can be held only in the country's 250 registration offices although, unlike England and Wales, religious marriages can be conducted anywhere.

Plans to bring Scotland's civil marriage laws more in line with England and Wales are being considered by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities after the publication of a consultation paper by the Registrar General earlier this year.

# Suicide twin felt guilty over his brother's murder

A MAN whose twin brother was kicked to death while protecting their father committed suicide less than two years later, an inquest heard yesterday. Ian Erskine, 21, was found hanging from a tree after saying: "I'm fed up feeling the way I am feeling."

His brother Anthony died in January 1996, after confronting a man and a youth who were abusing their father outside their home, as part of a hate campaign on the Clopton estate in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The inquest at Leamington Spa was told that Ian Erskine felt guilty about his twin's death, as if he should have been able to do something about it. He then formed a relationship with a girl who twice fell pregnant and had an abortion against his wishes.

Recording a verdict of suicide, the coroner, Michael Coker, said: "The circumstances are unfortunately all too obvious. This young man suffered the loss of his brother in extremely tragic circumstances. Unfortunately, following that, he appears to have had a somewhat stormy relationship which increased that depression."

The inquest heard that he began receiving psychiatric treatment and set up home with the girlfriend, who was not named, but contin-



Ian Erskine: found hanging in woods

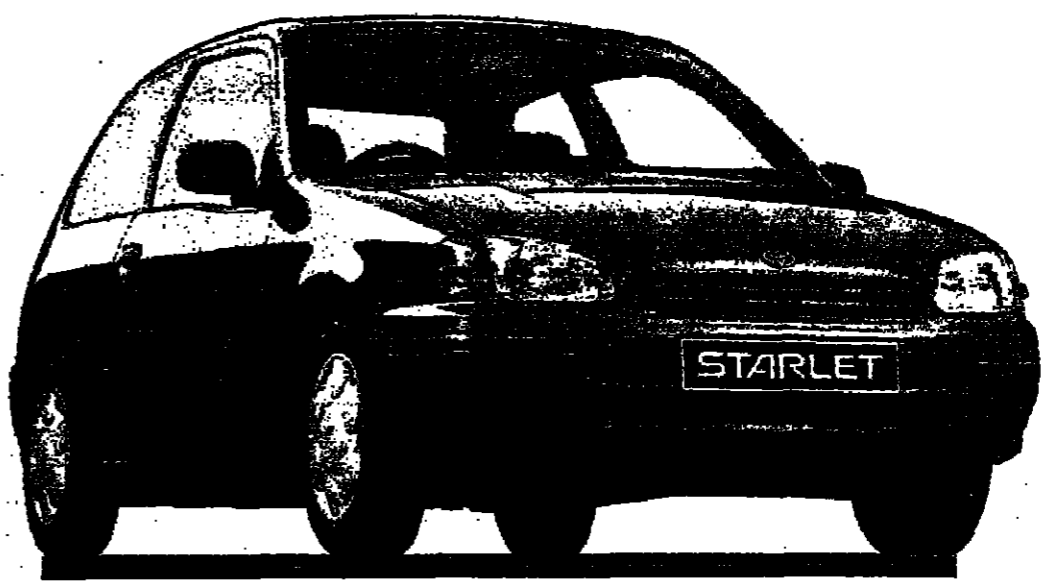
ued to suffer from depression. He made repeated attempts to injure himself by stabbing and by tying a belt around his neck. One month before he was found hanging in woods at Welcombe Hills, Stratford, he was charged with assaulting his girlfriend.

Before disappearing from the family home, he told his father, Harry: "I'm fed up feeling the way I am feeling." His body was discovered in November last year. Three suicide notes were found in his pockets.

The twins' parents and their other children, Gary and Natalie, all declined to comment after the hearing. In November 1996, Mark Hemmens, 21, was jailed for life for the murder of Anthony Erskine. Damian Collins, 16, was ordered to be detained indefinitely.

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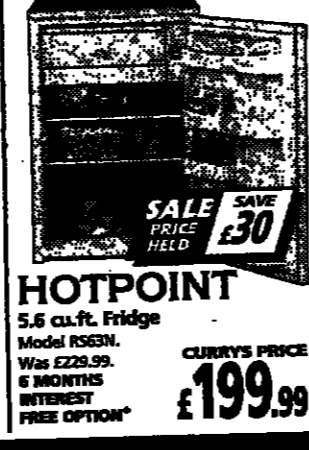
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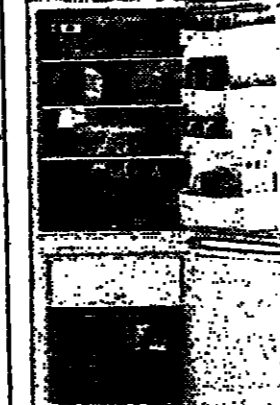


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International (U.K.) to assist its work in protecting wild birds, especially in Asia. All the data collected has been stored and posted on the World Nature Network website, which can be freely accessed on the Internet.

Broken down by region, there were 162,157 participants from Europe; 14,585 from Asia; 4,625 from Latin America; 1,521 from Africa; 826 from North America; and 362 from Oceania and Antarctica. By individual country, the largest response came from the U.K., with a total of 81,315 participants; followed by Spain with 40,000; Ukraine 8,829; Switzerland 7,205; Greece 6,500; Japan 4,537; Germany 4,531; Thailand 3,601; Singapore 3,503; and Bulgaria 3,501.

and Panama with 546. Forty-four percent of the reports were sent in by e-mail, 33 percent by facsimile, 10 percent by mail, 9 percent over the Internet, and 4 percent using other media.

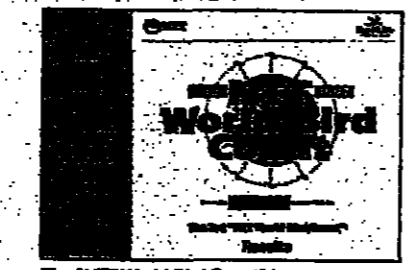


U.K. participants in the 3rd NTT World Bird Count: "It offers people of all nations a wonderful opportunity to communicate and work together toward a very worthy goal."

Global wild birds info exchange

In support of the worldwide campaigns to protect bird life, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT) initiated its "NTT Nature and Multimedia" campaign, and in 1995 it set up the World Nature Network, in cooperation with the Wild Bird Society of Japan. This network is designed to allow people the world over to exchange information about wildlife.

As part of this programme, that same year, working with BirdLife International they initiated an annual international birdwatchers' event called "NTT World Bird Count." People around the world were invited to send in their observation reports of wild birds — species observed, locations, related information, etc. — using any medium they liked, including telephone, mail, facsimile or the Internet. Every year since then, NTT has pledged to contribute \$1,000 (approximately £450) for every species of bird reported to BirdLife



The "NTT World Bird Count" home page.

3rd NTT World Bird Count

Last year, the 3rd NTT World Bird Count was held from October 1 to 31. During that one-month period, 184,376 people — more than twice as many as in the previous year — from 88 countries

U.K. generates over 45 percent of total

The response from the U.K. was remarkably strong, accounting for over 45 percent of the total participants. Currently an estimated one million people in the U.K. enjoy wild birdwatching, representing 1.6 percent of the population of approximately 60 million.

The country reporting the largest number of bird species was Colombia, with a total of 1,137 species. Next was Brazil with 820; Kenya 798; South Africa 740; Ecuador 734; Mexico 723; Costa Rica 619; Indonesia 611; U.S.A. 550; and Panama 546.

As a result, this year's donation to BirdLife International came to \$5,935,000 (approximately £27,000). Dr. Rands says the funds will be used to help their work in saving endangered species of birds around the world, particularly in areas that are facing the most critical danger.

First global event of its kind

NTT seeks to develop and expand the role of multimedia in society now and in the coming new century. In practical terms, this means solving problems related to the environment, resources and culture. Successful implementation of a global birdwatching event of this kind could be made possible only through the wide-scale utilisation of various forms of communication media. In its efforts to generate new content and attention for the World Nature Network, NTT has applied to the Guinness Book of Records to have the NTT World Bird Count included as the world's largest birdwatching event. Further details of the results will be analysed and posted, together with other related information, on the "NTT Nature and Multimedia" website (<http://www.wnn.or.jp/wnn/w-bird/english/index.html>).

A photography contest has also been arranged concurrently with the NTT World Bird Count. Selected photos from the contest are also featured on the website.



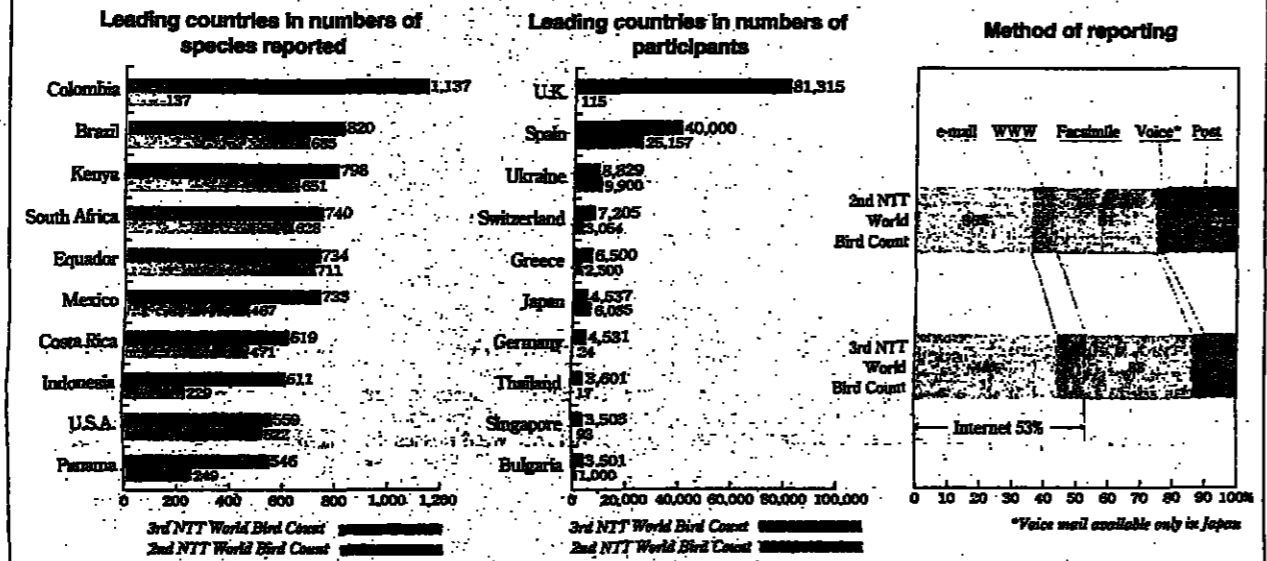
Attaching a transmitter to a bird.

The NTT World Bird Count is a major contribution to global efforts to protect bird life. At the same time, however, the threat to wildlife around the world continues to grow, despite all the work to prevent its destruction. Birds are particularly susceptible to environmental changes. Continuous and thorough action is now the most significant way of tackling the problem. Only in this way will we be able to protect all life on earth.

Communications — a key role in the preservation of wild birds

In a joint project with the Wild Bird Society of Japan, NTT has also taken on the task of tracking the migration routes of birds in the wild, using satellite surveillance systems. The aim is to find out more about their ecology and breeding grounds, thereby helping to protect their habitats. NTT's ultra-compact ARGOS<sup>®</sup> transmitters were fully able to meet this unique challenge of tracking wild birds as they move around the globe.

"A global environmental data collection system using meteorological satellites developed jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES)."



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# Sexism claims put cricket chiefs on the back foot

By Philip Davies Broughton and Kathryn Knight

EMBATTLED cricket chiefs admitted yesterday that they had taken a calculated risk not to contest a sex discrimination case brought by a former secretary in the hope of containing the potentially devastating damage to their reputation.

Richard Peel, the England and Wales Cricket Board's head of corporate affairs, said the ECB had decided several weeks ago not to attend the tribunal brought by Theresa Harrild because it would be preferable to endure short-term adverse publicity rather than engage in a "long-running slanging match".

That position was supported by Tim Lamb, the chief executive, and the 15-man board. "We didn't want to run the risk of people taking sides," Mr Lamb said.

The ECB spent yesterday in crisis meetings with lawyers trying to contain the fallout from the allegations made by Ms Harrild. Lord MacLaurin,

**Protestations undermined as secretary says male colleagues sent pornographic e-mail to her**

chairman of the board, kept in touch from Barbados, where he is watching the Test match in the West Indies.

Miss Harrild told a tribunal on Wednesday that executives, including Mr Lamb and Cliff Barker, the finance director, pressured her into having an abortion after she fell pregnant by a high-flying member of staff. She said the ECB paid for the abortion but she was later dismissed. She also attacked the sexist, bullying culture of the board.

Of 44 staff at the headquarters, 19 are women, of whom

two have executive roles. The board's protestations, however, were undermined by Sarah Bladon, an ECB employee. Miss Bladon, a marketing secretary, said she too had been subjected to malicious behaviour by senior male staff and had been sent pornographic e-mail.

She said she was shocked by the "malicious way" her employers had claimed Miss Harrild was sacked because of her inability to do her job and that she was unpopular with staff. "This is complete fabrication. It is an incredibly cruel way to behave towards anyone, let alone someone suffering from depression."

Although the Women's Cricket Association issued a statement supporting the ECB members, behind the scenes there was discomfort at Miss Harrild's allegations. The WCA is to hold a meeting in May to vote on the planned merger with the ECB and yesterday one member said there may be moves to block the proposals. "They have shot



Tim Lamb, ECB chief executive, with his cricket-playing daughter, Sophie. "We didn't want to run the risk of people taking sides," he said

themselves in the foot," she said. "At the end of the day they do need us to get their funding but it may get to a situation where we feel we need them less."

Tim de Lisle, Editor of *Wisden Cricket Monthly*, said events had painted a gloomy picture at a time when more and more women were becoming interested in the game. "The impact is very damaging. Cricket already has an image problem and is seen as rather fusty and out of touch,

especially in comparison with football," he said.

While cricket commentators and public figures attacked the secrecy and locker-room culture at the ECB, the board was voluble in its own defence. Mr Lamb, speaking at their headquarters at Lord's, denied Miss Harrild's accusations.

"We are proud of being a fair and caring employer, we have a very good record of staff loyalty and our staff will know that these allega-

tions are untrue," he said.

Mr Lamb, 44, who is married with two children, one a cricket-playing daughter, said: "We are pretty appalled by what are some pretty hurtful allegations. We thought we acted in an entirely appropriate manner and in good faith."

He refused to say why Miss Harrild had lost her job or reveal what he had said to her concerning her pregnancy.

Leading article, page 23  
Test report, page 52

## Ruling means a testing time for old-boy network

Publicity surrounding the case of Theresa Harrild has brought English cricket to a crossroads, argues Simon Wilde



ALTHOUGH the England and Wales Cricket Board, created amid much fanfare 14 months ago, sees itself as a modern, streamlined organisation, it has yet to shake off many of the arcane methods by which the game has been governed for generations.

The timing of this week's sex discrimination case could hardly be more unfortunate — or fortuitous, depending on one's point of view. Only two weeks ago, the board, through Tim Lamb, its chief executive, was obliged to state publicly its unequivocal support for women's cricket and regret the MCC's decision to extend its 211-year men-only rule.

And it is true, the men's game does support the women's, but that support was a long time coming. Apparently, through the old prejudices from the days before 1968, when the MCC handed over administration of the first-class game to the Test and County Cricket Board (the ECB's unwieldy predecessor), still thrive.

If women aspire to equitable treatment within English cricket, they may have a long way to go yet, because even those men who have been involved a long time do not understand quite how it works. As the financial state of English cricket has strengthened, so the number of board employees has grown. In 1968, the TCCB was run by a handful of staff; at the last count, there were 44 people working at Lord's for the ECB, as many secretarial staff as officers. None of the chief posts is held by a woman.

Mr Lamb was appointed as the first chief executive in 1996. The post was advertised, but the full list of applicants is not known. Four were interviewed, before the race came down to two men: Mr Lamb, the well-connected insider, and Tony Cross, a business-

Cynics suggested that there could only be one winner. The eight voting members of the TCCB's executive committee daily opted for Mr Lamb.

If the transition from TCCB to ECB did anything, it was to centralise power, which now resides largely in the hands of a 15-man management board, of which Mr Lamb is the one non-voting member. Other members are Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, the board's chairman, four elected non-executive chairmen; four representatives each of the first-class game and the non-first-class game; and a representative of MCC.

Informed opinion suggests that only Lord MacLaurin could call for the chief executive or his deputy's removal: no one else commands sufficient clout. Brought in 18 months ago, how he acts now may determine in which camp he really stands.

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# One teacher in 20 shuns Merchant of Venice

FIVE per cent of teachers say they would refuse to teach or stage Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* for schoolchildren, because they consider it anti-Semitic, according to an international survey.

The play about Shylock, the miserly Jewish moneylender who demands a "weight of carrion flesh" from Antonio, the merchant, in settlement of a debt, is on the current A-level syllabus. It has been the subject of controversy since it was first performed in 1596.

The reconstructed Globe Theatre in London commissioned a survey of 1,000 teachers in 12 countries, including Britain, the United States, Germany and Australia, for views on the play. Objectors said that the drama "could have a damaging influence on their pupils, or would raise issues too complex to resolve for younger teenagers."

Nearly 18 per cent of the teachers thought the play was anti-Semitic, and a further 21

## David Charter on academic anger over minority who say that pupils should not study 'anti-Semitic' play

per cent thought that the anti-Semitism depended on the particular production. However, some felt that the anti-Semitic theme provided an "excellent opportunity" to discuss issues such as the Holocaust. Others said that it was no "more anti-Jewish than *Macbeth* was anti-Scottish or *Othello* anti-black."

Those who shunned the play were criticised by Jean Aitchison, Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University. She said: "I would have thought that, if you start to worry about historical plays that show prejudices, you are going to be left with very little to see or read."

"There are a lot of folk songs

which are anti-Semitic because there was a quite extraordinary rumour that went around that Jewish women ate small boys. I have only seen productions which make Shylock into a money-grabbing criminal, but you need to put it in its historical context."

*The Merchant of Venice* is the next production at the Globe, the recreation of the playwright's own theatre in South London.

Richard Olivier, director of the Globe's forthcoming performance and son of the late Lord Olivier, told a conference at the the Globe yesterday that the play was "dangerous" and offered no simple answers. "I believe that

theatre should be dangerous without being offensive. *The Merchant of Venice* is exciting for that reason."

He also criticised those teachers who shied away from the play: "I believe acting and the theatre to be an important form of education. It offers the most powerful form of empathy. After my father played Othello, he was certainly as far from a racist as can be imagined."

James Shapiro, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, told the conference that there were 50 productions of the play in Nazi Germany, which invariably left out the intermarriage of a Jew and Christian.

He added: "No one is cleaning up this play today. Offensive thoughts and feelings exist in our society. The play offers an opportunity to take stock of them."

Theatre, page 35



True grip: an Abfad man working on a ship in Wallsend is secured by magnets

## Magnetic attraction helps workers stick to their task

By PAUL THOMPSON

THREE business partners have come up with an ingenious method for scaling oil rigs, buildings and the sides of ships.

Using a pair of 6in magnets and ropes, and abseiling into position, they are able to work hundreds of feet above the ground without scaffolding, cranes or cradles. The technique was developed by Alan Fada, his brother Ian and their partner, Chris Hariton, all from Sunderland.

The experienced offshore workers were looking for a simple, quick way of getting staff into position. They believed magnets would work and spent months hunting for some strong enough to grip through 5mm of paintwork.

Their company, Abfad, first used the magnets, measuring 7in by 6in, and with a pulling power of 264lb, at Harland and Wolff's shipyard in Belfast last October. The firm has since won other contracts including work in Qatar and on the giant pipe-laying vessel *Solitair* at Swan Hunter at Wallsend.

Workers are attached to ropes and use the two magnets to move across a metal surface and into position. The magnets weigh one stone each and have a spring-loaded mechanism that allows them to be released easily from the metal. They can be clipped to the worker's harness, freeing him to carry out tasks such as putting on a

coating, cutting, welding, inspecting or grinding.

Mr Hariton said the first time the magnets were used was nerve-racking. "The lads had to be a long way up the ship. You could hear the sound of nails being bitten. But we had checked out every conceivable aspect of safety and had no doubt it would work."

He said the company used contract workers who needed to be confident the magnets would hold. "They are very strong and grip through even the thickest paint on ships so, the lads are safe. But you still need nerves of steel. We are able to coat the ends of ships, which is something that was once impossible using ropes."

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Woman attacked on train

A woman was seriously sexually assaulted on a train from London Bridge to Brighton. The woman, from Essex, was attacked in a lavatory on the 7.55am train on Wednesday.

The assault is the sixth sex attack on rail passengers in the South East in the past six weeks but British Transport Police said the incidents were not believed to be linked.

Last month three schoolboys aged between 6 and 11 were sexually assaulted at Glynde Station, East Sussex, by a man thought to have been armed. Last Saturday a youth aged 17 was sexually assaulted on a train near Sittingbourne station, Kent.

#### IRA charge

A fourth man was charged in Dublin with murdering a detective during an attempted IRA robbery from a Post Office van in Adare, Co Limerick, in 1996. Kevin Walsh, 42, of Patrickswell, was also charged with attempted murder of another policeman.

#### Horse trading

Seven British police horses are to go on patrol in Dublin. North Yorkshire Police, which disbanded its mounted section because it could not afford the £330,000 annual cost, has sold the horses to the Garda, making them the force's first mounted section.

#### Mayor under fire

Margaret Layland, 45, the Mayor of Worcester, who is married, has been asked to resign by the city's Labour group over allegations that she had an "improper" relationship with her chauffeur, Stan Brookes, 35. Both are suspended on full pay.

#### Butt litter fines

Smokers who drop cigarette butts on the ground face a £25 on-the-spot fine after Southampton City Council decided to clean up its shopping centre. The council says that butts account for 70 per cent of litter and local laws are the only way to eradicate the problem.

#### Rail dispute ends

Train drivers for Merseyrail Electrics voted by 83.7 per cent for a £20,000 basic salary, extra pay for Sundays, a 37-hour week and no compulsory redundancies. The agreement ends a series of one-day stoppages that started in November.

#### Hard to credit

A pet tabby called Thomas has been offered a credit card with a range of benefits including 56 days' interest-free credit. Mike Davies, of Weston-super-Mare, has asked Scottish Widows why Jerry, his other cat, has not also been offered a card.

## Human tornado splits village

By TIM JONES

PLANS to commemorate a motorcycle stuntman 25 years after his death have divided the inhabitants of the village where he lived as a boy.

George "Tornado" Smith rode around a "wall of death" at fairs and trained his pet lion to crouch on the handlebars in his finale. Now parish councillors in Boxford, Suffolk, have been accused of being tasteless for depicting Smith on a village sign to be unveiled tomorrow.

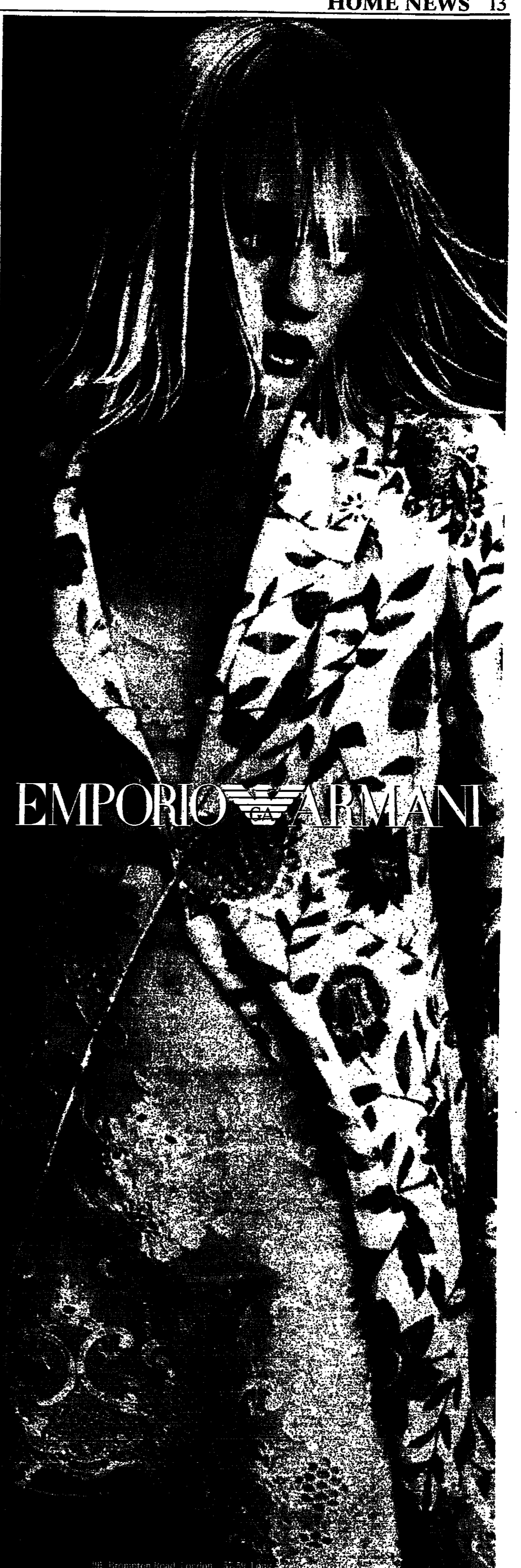
His picture will appear alongside traditional images of the church, the river, a mill, apples and a sheep to mark

the fact the village was once a wool community. At a public meeting to discuss the sign, several villagers voiced strong objection to Mr Smith being included. Philip Rich, chairman of the Boxford Society, a preservation group, said: "There has been some violent disagreement. It is all a question of taste and not everyone has the same taste."

Hardiman Scott, a veteran broadcaster and author, said: "Mr Smith is an interesting part of Boxford's history, but I think that, for an official sign, it might be getting things out of perspective." Jean Bullman, another resident, said: "I was against it. Some people think the sign is garish and tasteless." However, one of the

councillors, Vic Rice, 64, who remembers seeing Mr Smith walking his lion, said: "He was a bit of a rogue, but he was a real character. Lots of villages would love to be able to boast such a colourful chap."

Born in 1908, Tornado Smith learned to ride a motorbike as an AA patrolman and joined a "wall of death" act at the age of 20. After serving in the Merchant Navy during the war—he was turned down by the RAF because he wore thick glasses—he returned to the wall before resigning in the early 1960s. The lion, Britain, broke its leg and was shot by Smith and buried in the garden of the White Hart, which is now the pub car park. He died in South Africa in 1972, leaving £200,000.





EMPORIO ARMANI

# Labour row gives Hull bad name, says bishop

### Andrew Pierce on a plea for party leadership to bring years of damaging political strife to an end

THE Bishop of Hull urged the Labour Party yesterday to clean up its act in the city, which he said had been let down by years of political infighting.

The Right Rev James Jones expressed his sadness at the "bad image" of Hull created by the controversy involving John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and MP for Hull East. The Bishop said that Labour had failed to deal with strife caused by a clash of personalities within the party.

"I am very ready to speak critically," he told *The Times*. "I am called by God to be an advocate of the people. Hull is a great city with positive news to tell. The internal disputes in the Labour Party have clearly created a bad image. I think the party has to sort itself out in the city. There are factions."

Bishop Jones, who was confirmed on Wednesday as the next Bishop of Liverpool, expressed strong support for Mr Prescott, who has complained of a vendetta after allegations about the sale of former council houses to a company of which his son is a director. But the Bishop acknowledges that there have been long-running grievances over some of the Labour-dominated city council's actions, particularly concerning housing policy.

Referring to the lack of opposition — just one Liberal Democrat on the city council, he said: "There has become a major problem of



The Bishop of Hull supports John Prescott but says Labour's dominance in the city causes big problems

accountability. Decisions are being made within a group which are not being aired fully and debated properly. The Labour councillors provide their own opposition to each other. It is the same when one party dominates of any political hue. Any government, local or national, that has such a huge majority... I think there are major problems."

The intervention of the highly regarded Bishop, who is tipped as a future Archbishop of York or Canterbury, will be an embarrassment for the Labour leadership because of the implicit criticism of its

failure to act. Bishop Jones was appointed successor to the Right Rev Lord Sheppard of Liverpool on the personal recommendation of Tony Blair. The 14-month delay in making the appointment, to a city that has been scarred by years of factionalism on the Labour-controlled council, arose because the Prime Minister rejected the two names submitted by the Crown Appointments Commission.

Bishop Jones, 49, who is married with three children, was the first leading churchman to speak publicly during the break-up of Robin Cook's

marriage breakdown against politicians whose private lives conflicted with the standards of morality expected of them in their public role.

He said that as Bishop he was concerned with a range of social issues, including housing, and had regularly taken up residents' cases with the city council. Many of his priests lived on some of the most run-down estates, which were being regenerated in much the same manner as the houses sold to an associate of Mr Prescott's son. They were familiar with the plight of residents.

"Local councillors sometimes do not realise how powerful they are as far as the local community is involved," he said. "The result is that people who already felt powerless are made to feel even more powerless."

Bishop Jones, the author of eight books who is emerging as the leading evangelical in the Church of England's younger generation of senior clerics, was particularly warm in his praise for Mr Prescott. "Over the years people have come to me to share their concerns, but never ever, have I heard any doubts voiced about Mr Prescott's integrity. Quite the contrary in fact." He said that he would be sorry to leave Hull after his three and half years as Bishop there. "It will be a big wrench. I hope and pray that the problems will be resolved."

# Blair threatened with massive union march

### Jill Sherman on the wrangle over recognition rights

A TRADE union leader warned Tony Blair last night that there would be massive demonstrations on the streets of London if the Government failed to improve workers' rights and provide more help for single parents.

John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general workers' union, said that trade unionists would follow the countryside lobby and hold their own marches if the Prime Minister gave in to employers' demands over union recognition. Addressing the TUC's Women's Conference in Scarborough, Mr Edmonds said that the unions did not realise they would need their lobbying skills so much after Labour's election victory last May.

"I noticed that the Government seemed to be impressed by 100,000 people walking through London wearing green Barbour jackets and waving foxes tails," said Mr Edmonds, who is also this year's TUC president.

"I remember when we turned out demonstrations of more than a quarter of a million to support a trade union agenda which was far nobler than anything the Countryside Alliance stands for."

"We did it then, and if that's what it takes we will do it again."

The unions would also march the streets of London over maternity rights, equality legislation, and rights for single parents, he told the conference. Earlier yesterday, he



This month's Countryside March: John Edmonds says trade unions will do better for a nobler cause

warned Labour that there would be "very difficult consequences for the party" if it failed to stand by its promise to grant trade unions recognition in the workplace.

The unions are still arguing that they should win recognition rights if more than 50 per cent of those who take part in a ballot vote in favour, which they claim is a promise made in Labour's election manifesto. But Labour sources have suggested that these ballots would be valid only if at least 80 per cent of the workforce took part in them.

The Government is also likely to accept the employers' demands that firms with fewer than 50 workers will be exempt, a concession opposed by the unions.

Mr Edmonds said: "We are not going to let the CBI wreck

the White Paper and we are not going to let employers deny working people in this country the basic civil right of being represented by a recognised trade union."

He was surprised that the Government still had to flesh out its proposals, given that these were "negotiated in detail before the general election."

Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, Mr Edmonds insisted that there could be no watering down of the Government's commitment to union recognition. "I think the Labour Government will understand that if it didn't deliver that there would be some very difficult consequences within the party. Nothing could be clearer in the manifesto than that. A majority of the people want recognition. The law will be changed to deliver it."

# Hunt Bill facing certain failure

### By JAMES LANDALE POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Bill to ban hunting faces almost certain failure today despite a final attempt by Labour MPs to save it.

With Tony MPs determined to talk the Bill out, anti-hunting campaigners tried to deploy parliamentary tactics to secure extra debating time. They tabled a new clause intended to make the hundreds of Tory delaying amendments redundant and speed the Bill's progress through Parliament.

But Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, refused to select the new clause for debate. By convention, the Speaker does not give reasons for her selection of amendments but a Commons official said: "This is not unprecedented."

Even if the clause had been selected, Tory MPs had tabled a range of new amendments to continue their delaying tactics. The Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill now looks almost certain to run out of parliamentary time when it comes up for the second day of its report, stage today. Tory MPs have more than 100 amendments and new clauses to be debated over the five hours allotted to the Bill.

If debate on the Bill is not completed, it will go to the back of the queue of Private Member's Bills. Labour MPs will use the Bill's death to step up the pressure on Tony Blair to grant government time for a new attempt to ban hunting.

# 'Cool Britannia' image has helped to foster false hope

### RIDDELL ON POLITICS

FIRST, it was lone parents. Then came the students, the countryside lobby, the Scots, rock music and, now, the left-wing intelligentsia. It is disillusion time. The Blair Government is now out of fashion with a wide range of groups that eagerly jumped on the new Labour bandwagon last spring.

Much of the recent criticism is absurd. The Blair Government is being blamed for non-existent betrayals, for U-turns on policies it never advocated — and which, in some cases, it specifically rejected in opposition. The *New Musical Express*, the regular reading of the assiduous political columnist, this week contains nine pages of invective against what it calls "The Labour Government's War on You". The main charges are about workfare, curfews for teenagers, a refusal to open a debate on drugs and tuition fees.

The Government's policies on all but the latter had been made clear by Labour before the election. Gordon Brown repeatedly said that under-25s would no longer have the option of remaining on the dole, while Jack Straw was explicit about drugs and curfews. Although there was no reference to tuition fees in the Labour manifesto, that was because the Dearing committee was still sitting. David Blunkett had indicated the general direction in which the funding of students was moving.

Most of the accompanying commentary is a campaigning slogan rather than a governing strategy. But it has not been clear how far these goals represent a distinctive programme, as opposed to showing that Labour could be a competent government. Mr Blair prides himself on his pragmatism and lack of ideology, but that can foster confusion and false hopes.

It is revealing that Mr Blair has been seeking after the election to establish ideological roots, notably at the two "Chequers" seminars last November and a month ago. He has talked of a third way, distinct both from collectivism and free market

individualism, "beyond Left and Right", as in the title of an influential book by Professor Anthony Giddens.

An intense debate is under way about the meaning of the third way, notably in the pages of the *New Statesman* and on the *Nexus* Internet network. Academics such as David Marquand have been worried that the Blair Government may, like the Clinton Administration and the New Zealand Labour party, make its peace with new right economics and merely seek to temper its excesses, instead of tackling the social upheavals created by globalisation. Two younger Labour policy thinkers, Simon Buckley and Neal Lawson, argue in the current *New Statesman* that the Government needs to revive the values of social democracy by addressing the issue of inequality. It is all a question of definition, of establishing an identity instead of pretending that all can be in the Big Tent of new Labour. If Blairism is to mean anything, it needs enemies.

PETER RIDDELL



Tony Blair and President Chirac yesterday at the EU summit, where they clashed over the admission of Cyprus

# Turkish dilemma exposes EU rift

By CHARLES BREMNER AND MICHAEL BINYON

TENSIONS over Cyprus and Turkey yesterday clouded a grand London summit to launch the expansion of the European Union to take in the divided Mediterranean island and ten former communist states in Central Europe.

In a day of lofty rhetoric from Tony Blair and 25 other European leaders about Europe's newfound unity, France and Greece signalled their readiness for opposite reasons, to try to block negotiations.

Greece said it could freeze the whole enlargement to the east, a process expected to take well over a decade, if the Turks were "given a veto" over the accession of Cyprus. France said Cyprus might have to be kept out of entry talks.

Behind the argument lay the EU's dilemma over Turkey, a rejected suitor to the EU, which refused to attend the summit although the event had been convened largely to assuage its feelings.

Accession talks are due to start with all applicant states on March 31, but the EU wants Turkish northern Cyprus on the negotiating team. As the current President of the EU, Britain welcomed as "very courageous" a new offer from Glaukos Clerides, the Prime Minister of Cyprus, to include Turkish Cypriots on his team. However, Rauf Denktaş, leader of the Turkish community, refuses to take part in the talks.

While Britain steered a middle course, saying talks would start whether or not the Turkish Cypriots were involved,



President Chirac said that Europe would have to "wait a bit longer" if it were not possible to include the Turkish Cypriots. "If Cyprus has a vocation to join the EU, the Union does not have a vocation to take in only a piece of Cyprus and integrate conflicts that are not its own," he said.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said Turkey was welcome to join the European Conference, which is to become a standing forum for

pan-European discussions among future EU members. George Papandreu, the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, said the Greek parliament would never ratify the accession of any new EU states "if the only reason that Cyprus is not being let in is the fact that the Turks are saying no".

The difficulty over Turkey did little to detract from the enthusiasm with which leaders of the former Eastern bloc states greeted their first recep-

tion by the EU as accepted applicants to the rich Western club. Under Mr Blair's chairmanship, they agreed to new common action with the EU on drugs and international crime, as well as a declaration warning Serbia to end the violence in its Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo.

Mr Blair hailed the "extraordinary success" of "this truly historic day". It was "an extraordinary symbol of how a Europe that has been divided for decades after decades has come together".

Beyond the ceremony, however, the EU and leaders of the former Eastern bloc states are aware that years of negotiation lie ahead before the new applicants are deemed ready for membership.

The sheer unwieldiness of a future EU of up to 26 states was demonstrated by the chaotic state of many of the arrangements for the conference. Interpreters slaved from booths piled on each other in Lancaster House. More than 1,000 disgruntled foreign journalists struggled to work in a space planned for 250.

Cl Faei vetoed. President Chirac yesterday rejected an EU plan for a broad-ranging free trade pact with the United States, saying Paris would not hesitate to block it. "This is a decision which in principle must be taken by unanimity and we thus have a right of veto. We would not hesitate to invoke our country's vital interests," he said after the conference. Britain and Germany have hailed the planned New Transatlantic Marketplace that the European Commission has voted to pursue. (Reuters)

## America voices unease

Washington: The US Administration yesterday stressed its unease that enlargement talks did not include Turkey. (Brownwen Maddox writes)

Turkey is more likely to make the right choices about its own future if the EU makes clear that it is holding a place for Turkey when it is ready," Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State, said.

## Danish coalition clings on to power with one-seat majority

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

AFTER a photo-finish election in Denmark, the ruling Social Democrat-led coalition of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the Prime Minister, confounded all opinion polls to stay in office for another four years.

"I told the Queen the result of the election and said that I intended to continue as Prime Minister at the head of the present Government," Mr Rasmussen told reporters outside the Amalienborg Palace after an audience with Queen Margrethe yesterday. Mr

Rasmussen's centre-left coalition and its allies took an overall 90 seats in the 179-member Copenhagen parliament, against a total of 89 seats for the combined centre-right opposition, led by Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, a former Foreign Minister. The turnout was 86 per cent.

Mr Rasmussen, in power at the head of various coalitions since 1993, clinched victory when two of the four MPs for the North Atlantic Faeroes and Greenland — Denmark's

overseas territories — gave him their support.

Apart from Mr Ellemann-Jensen's Liberal Party, the greatest losers in the election were the Conservatives, who lost almost half their seats.

The greatest gains were made by the far-right Danish People's Party, led by Pia Kjaersgaard, which tripled its representation in the house with more than 7 per cent of the vote after campaigning on a blatantly anti-immigration platform.

Mr Rasmussen has pledged to continue his ruling coalition with the small centrist Radical Liberal Party and pursue unchanged fiscal policies designed to keep Denmark's economic boom on course.

The nation's next big hurdle is a referendum on the Amsterdam treaty of reforms to the workings of the European Union, scheduled for May 28. Mr Rasmussen has vowed to do his utmost to ensure a Danish "yes" to the treaty. A parallel exit poll on election night showed Danes' support for the treaty at 48 per cent, with 32 per cent against.



Poul Nyrup Rasmussen celebrates four more years

## Extradition victory for US killer

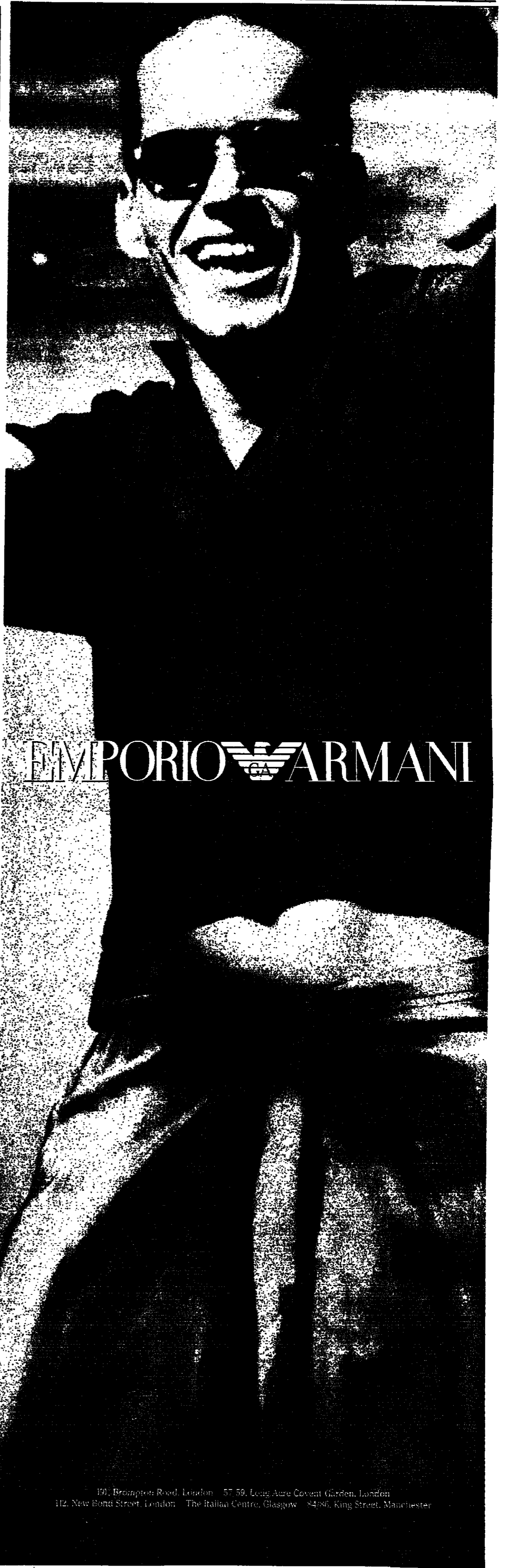
FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

IRA EINHORN, the former hippy guru convicted of murdering his girlfriend in 1977, will be able to remain in France a free man after the French supreme court upheld a lower court's decision not to extradite him to America.

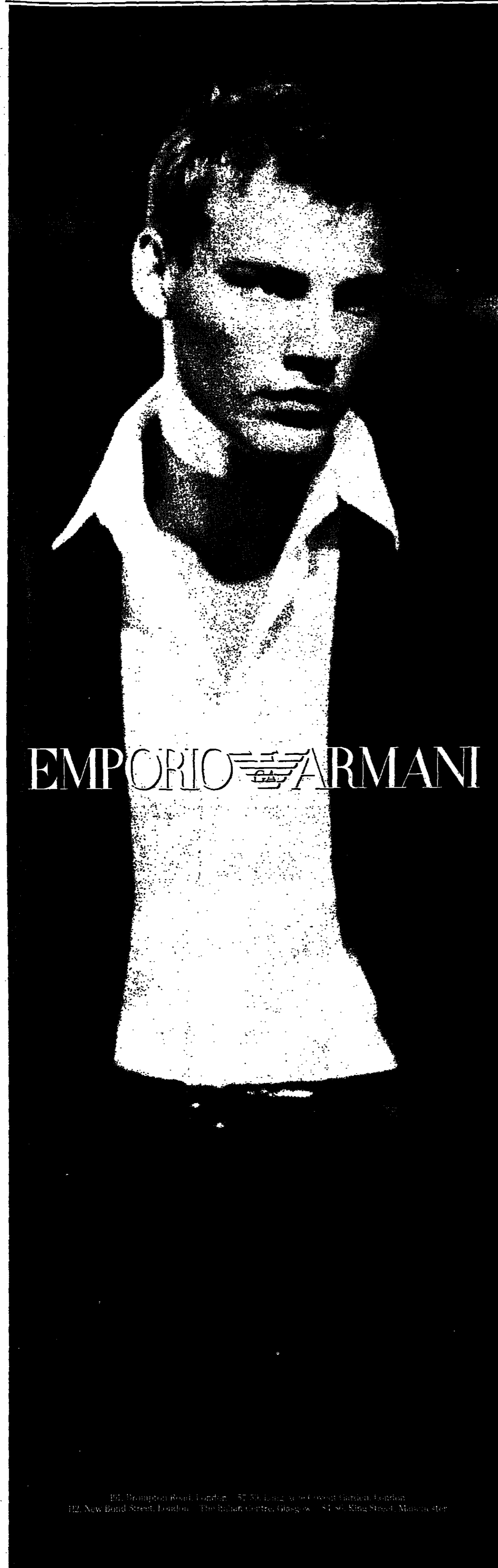
Einhorn, 57, who was tried in absentia in the United States in 1993 and sentenced to life imprisonment, spent almost two decades on the run before he was tracked to a village in southwestern France last summer.

Under French law, anyone tried in absentia has the automatic right to a retrial, and in December Einhorn's lawyers persuaded a Bordeaux court that extraditing him would infringe his legal rights, since there is no provision for another trial in America.

That ruling has now been upheld by the French supreme court. "He is getting away with murder. I am incensed, offended, outraged," Lyme Abrams, the Philadelphia district attorney, said.



EMPORIO ARMANI



# Suharto to appoint Cabinet of cronies

PRESIDENT SUHARTO will soon announce a "family Cabinet" composed of relatives and close associates in a formula which is likely to shake foreign confidence in Indonesia's ability to overcome its problems.

The key appointments to the Cabinet have been leaked, most probably to test world reaction. Meanwhile, the Government has announced that it will not now send a mission to America but will await the arrival of a team from the International Monetary Fund to discuss its rescue package.

Both gestures appear calculated to remind the IMF and Washington that they are dealing with a leader who has controlled a nation of 13.677 islands with 300 different ethnic groups for 32 years.

The Cabinet appointments also show how the President, 76, has lost confidence in the technocrats who have given the country decades of extraordinary economic growth. The President is now drawing to himself only those he can fully

trust as the economic crisis threatens his leadership and the future of the country.

When it was first suggested that the President's close friend and golfing partner, Bob Hasan, would become Minister of Trade, most people thought it was a joke.

But by last night it appeared that Mr Suharto was determined to have him in the Cabinet. Mr Hasan, who controls two million acres of forestry concessions, is the epitome of the crony businessman and has such good access to the President that he wields more power than any bureaucrat.

Mr Hasan controls all the principal timber trading associations in Indonesia and shares control of one of the

country's domestic airlines with one of the President's sons. He also has interests in construction, media, mining and cars. It is estimated that Hasan's companies had revenues of \$2 billion (£1.2 billion) in 1991.

Since Mr Hasan is of Chinese extraction, though a Muslim, his appointment may help to pacify the Chinese community, which has been made a scapegoat for rising prices, sometimes with the local encouragement of the army. Although Chinese are only 3 per cent of the population, they control 70 per cent of the economy.

Also expected to figure in the Cabinet is the President's eldest daughter, Tutut or Siti Hardianti Rukmana. She has

business interests which stretch from bank exchange concessions at Jakarta international airport to the tolls from the expressway into the city and a broad-based series of interests with her husband. She is expected to be given the welfare portfolio. The Finance Ministry is likely to be in the hands of Puan Bawazier, director-general for tax, who is close to the Suharto children.

"I keep looking for a silver lining to all this but I just can't find one," a foreign diplomat said. "If there were a dream team of economists there might be some hope, but on the basis of the names so far there is no one with real economic experience."

Students kept up the steady drumbeat of protests across the nation yesterday but so far there has been no real attempt to challenge the police or the military in an all-out showdown. That may come in July and August with the arrival of the dry season, when food shortages are likely to hit hard.

Western diplomats can see no saving grace in a line-up of trusted tycoons and relatives. David Watts writes in Jakarta

## WORLD IN BRIEF

### Condemned dog beaten to death

Dar es Salaam: A man whose dog was sentenced to death because it was called Immigration said yesterday that he had been forced to bludgeon it to death as Tanzanian police were unwilling to spare a bullet. A report in the country's *Daily Mail* said Anatoly Kachela's mongrel bitch was expecting puppies at the time.

A magistrate condemned the dog because it bore the name of a "respected government department". The case has caused a storm and government officials have ordered an inquiry. (Reuters)

### Amnesty hits at UN silence on Algeria

Geneva: Amnesty International has criticised the United Nations Human Rights Commission for its silence over Algeria's massacres. The group also called for the 53-member Commission, which is about to start its annual meeting, to speak out on the violence in Kosovo. Amnesty officials said the forum risked becoming irrelevant if it did not stand up against killings. (Reuters)

### Iberia pilots strike over rented planes

Madrid: Pilots for the Iberia and Aviaaco Spanish airlines have called strikes every Monday and Friday from March 27 to July 31. The pilots are objecting to Iberia's decision to rent 11 airliners from Air Europa, piloted by Air Europa employees. The pilots intend to strike from 8am to 1pm and from 4pm to 10pm local time. (AFP)

### Arms cache found in biker's garage

Brussels: Two bags of explosives were among a large cache of arms found by police in a garage at Waregem in western Belgium. It was rented by a member of Hell's Angels Belgium, which is under investigation after similar finds, a judicial official said. Some of the weapons were stolen from a military depot last year, the official added. (AFP)

### A job for life

Washington: The US Senate has recognised Milton Garland, 102, as America's oldest worker (Tom Rhodes writes). A mechanical and refrigeration engineer, Mr Garland still arrives each day at Frick Company in Pennsylvania where he started work in 1920 for 47 cents an hour.



### Air emergency injures Britons

By MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THREE British Army servicemen were injured yesterday when their Gazelle helicopter made an emergency landing in central Kenya during an exercise.

Two of the men, including Major Mike Smith, the pilot, were seriously hurt. All three were flown to a Nairobi hospital.

The soldiers, from the Army Air Corps, based at Wattisham in Suffolk, were hurt after their Gazelle developed a mechanical fault and landed at Mpalae Farm, at the foot of Mount Kenya.

A spokeswoman for the British High Commission in Nairobi said: "Major Smith is in a serious but stable condition. The other two have sustained injuries but they are not life-threatening."

## Vanunu jail isolation to end

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE former nuclear technician who revealed Israel's nuclear secrets to *The Sunday Times* is going to be moved from the solitary confinement in which he has been held for nearly 12 years, his Israeli lawyer said yesterday.

According to British-based campaigners led by the actress Susannah York, Mordechai Vanunu is the longest-serving prisoner in solitary confinement in the world. The isolation in his cramped cell in Ashkelon jail is said to have had a serious effect on his mental condition.

His lawyer, Avigdor Feldman, said he had been told by an Israeli government official that a decision had been taken to move his client out of isolation soon. He did not believe that Vanunu, 43, would be in danger of being



Mordechai Vanunu: a tormented man

attacked by other prisoners. His comments came after a report in the Tel Aviv daily *Haaretz* which said that the decision was expected to be announced by the Justice Ministry within the next 24 hours, ahead of a hearing by the Supreme Court on a petition by Vanunu, a Moroccan-born

Jew now converted to Christianity, requesting that he be granted the same rights as other prisoners.

Vanunu, who protests that he has no more nuclear secrets to reveal and, therefore, can be allowed contact with other prisoners, was lured from London to Rome by a female Mossad agent and then kidnapped in October 1986. He was convicted of spying and jailed for 18 years.

He has consistently denied being a spy or accepting any money from *The Sunday Times*, claiming instead to be a "whistle-blower" bent on humanitarian concerns in exposing to the world that Israel possessed a "formidable nuclear arsenal, making it the sixth largest nuclear power."

Mr Feldman said that part of the reason for the change of heart by the Israeli authorities was international pressure. Several human-rights groups

and personalities in the world of the arts and science have taken up Vanunu's cause, as well as foreign leaders including Magre Bondevik, Prime Minister of Norway.

Debi Zucker, a left-wing MP and a campaigner for Vanunu, said: "He no longer poses a security threat. If the purpose of the extended isolation was to drive him out of his mind, then they have succeeded. That is why they do not care if he is let out of isolation. I found a tormented man."

Mr Feldman said yesterday that he has recently sensed misgivings among government officials about the harsh way in which his client had been treated. "I would not say it is a totally fantastic possibility that he would be released after he has completed serving two thirds of his sentence next month," he added. Israeli politicians do not share his optimism.



# China ready to sign UN pledge on human rights

CHINA, in an apparent move to head off fresh criticism of its human rights record, announced yesterday that it was preparing to sign a United Nations covenant on protecting political and civil liberties. But foreign diplomats in Beijing said they foresaw no major breakthrough towards a more open political society.

"The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to international covenants on human rights," Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister, told a news conference during the session of the National People's Congress.

The timing seemed designed to head off any censure motion at next week's meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and defuse controversy over China's human rights record in the international arena, analysts said. Mr Qian gave no details on when China would sign, and Beijing has yet to ratify less controversial covenants on social, cultural and economic rights that it had signed last year.

**Action to avoid censure does not herald an open society, writes James Pringle**

During the press conference, Mr Qian, 70, who has often had to defend China's rights record in international forums, announced he is resigning from the post that he has held since 1988. "My age is unsuitable for the tough job," he said.

China has already scored a significant victory in persuading European Union countries not to sponsor a critical motion this year, analysts noted. The United States has not said what position it will take, but President Clinton is under congressional pressure to back a resolution in Geneva critical of China's rights violations.

The European decision drew criticism from China's leading political activist, Wei Jingsheng, who was released last year on medical parole and is now in exile. He said in London that the move was "quite stupefying".

The EU countries cited "progress on human rights" for their decision, which has been criticised by pressure groups which claim that Europe has acted to further business interests in China.

Diplomats say European governments are anxious for tangible rights concessions from Beijing in return for their withdrawal from the Geneva resolution.

In fact, China has made some gestures in an effort to enhance its record, still tarnished by the bloody 1989 army crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing.

Besides releasing Mr Wei after 18 years in jail, Beijing has invited Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to visit. Last month three US clergymen toured China at President Jiang Zemin's invitation.

There have been resolutions in Geneva critical of China's rights record each year since the 1989 crackdown, but Beijing has always mustered enough support to quash the moves. Some critics say the resolution has become an empty exercise that enrages China without producing advantages.

The political covenant that Beijing says it will sign covers freedom of expression and religion, peaceful assembly, participation in public affairs and elections, freedom of movement and equality before the law. Apart from some relaxation in internal travel, the other rights do not exist.



Sergio Casadei, now aged 72, was a stunt man in the 1959 epic film *Ben Hur* and took part in the chariot race won by the picture's hero

## Spirit of Ben Hur returns to Rome

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

FORGET Ferrari and Formula One: on Sunday, Rome will echo again to the stirring clatter and roar of *Ben Hur*-style chariot races, with drivers and horses thundering down the Appian Way on chariots built for the epic 1959 film and lovingly preserved by local enthusiasts involved in its production.

Under a scheme devised a year ago by Francesco Rutelli, the Mayor of Rome, the Appian Way beyond the Aurelian Walls on the city outskirts was closed to traffic on Sundays. At first the pedestrian zone was packed, with Romans and tourists picnicking among the tombs and catacombs that line the road, built in the fourth century BC.

The Appian Way, ancient Rome's key link with its expanding Eastern empire, was where St Paul was led into Rome as a prisoner, and where St Peter is said to have met Christ while fleeing in the opposite direction. It was also



Chariots made locally for the film starring Charlton Heston have been restored

won by Charlton Heston against the odds. He bought some chariots from the film company and has restored them.

*Ben Hur*, directed by William Wyler, won 11 Oscars. There were 1,500 extras for the great chariot race. "Most of those who took part are dead, except me and Alfredo Danesi," Signor Casadei said. Signor Danesi, 73, who trains horses, also kept some of the film's chariots, which were made by his father, a coach builder. He hires them out to film-makers. "They show real attention to detail, beautifully made," he said.

Chariots, first developed around 3,000 BC for warfare, were used for races at the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and for public games staged in Rome at the Circus Maximus. Light and fragile, they were often smashed in collisions, with drivers dragged to their deaths.

Signor Casadei said modern races would be less drastic. "Our dream is to stage races in the Colosseum," he said.

**HEART OF THE MATTER**

The Communist Party of China has admitted that it is unable to control separatist forces in the Xinjiang region bordering Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia and the former Soviet Union. Beijing normally plays down reports of unrest among the Turkic-speaking people in Xinjiang. Abdul Abat Abdurixit, the deputy secretary of the regional Communist Party, claimed that record economic growth and a crackdown on separatism were helping to stabilise the area.

### Beijing rattled by separatists

A TOP Communist official admitted yesterday that China might fail to curb separatism in the mainly Muslim Xinjiang region bordering Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia

THE SUNDAY TIMES

**SYLVIA'S GHOST**

The dark secrets that drove Ted Hughes into exile

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# Friend tells how she betrayed Lewinsky

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

LINDA TRIPP, the woman whose secret tape recordings of Monica Lewinsky provoked the most damaging scandal of the Clinton White House, spoke for the first time yesterday of the pain involved in her decision to betray a friend.

She also accused the Pentagon of demoting her since the scandal of the President's alleged sexual relationship with the former White House trainee emerged in January. Vilified by both the White House and lawyers for Ms Lewinsky, Ms Tripp, 49, has been variously painted as an unreliable witness and a "pathetic specimen of humanity".

In an interview with *USA Today*, however, she described the anxiety involved in taping her younger friend, who no longer speaks to her, and said: "It's been painful for me and my family. In time, the truth will be revealed."

A Pentagon colleague of Ms Lewinsky, Ms Tripp claimed the Defence Department had recently demoted her with a

view to terminating her contract. She said: "This sends a chilling message to any government employee, political or career, who would dare disclose evidence of a possible crime allegedly perpetrated by their employer."

However, Pentagon officials said Ms Tripp, who has worked from home since the controversy erupted, was un-



Tripp planned a book on White House life

able to perform her job from there and so had changed her duties.

Ms Tripp said that she feared her career was about to be placed in jeopardy after she was quoted in a magazine discussing claims that President Clinton had groped Kathleen Willey, a White House aide. She suspected a subpoena would arrive from lawyers for Paula Jones, the former state employee who claims Mr Clinton asked her to perform oral sex when he was Governor of Arkansas.

On the advice of friends and Lucianne Goldberg, a New York agent who had approached her about writing a book on the Clinton White House, Ms Tripp bought a tape recorder, attached it to the telephone in her sitting room and recorded conversations with Ms Lewinsky.

"When she told me this story, I thought, my God, no one is going to believe this. This is too bizarre. She had to tape them," said Ms Gold-

berg. Ms Tripp had worried for three weeks before buying the \$100 (£60) instrument and recorded only 20 hours of conversations over the next four months. Many calls were taken in her bedroom, where there was no tape recorder. By the end she had 19 full tapes, but transcribed none.

Her side of the story was revealed as further witnesses appeared before the grand jury in Washington yesterday. At the same time Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, was said to be ready to indict Webster Hubbell, the former Associate Attorney-General and friend of the Clintons, on possible charges of tax evasion and fraud for allegedly receiving "hush money" over his silence in the Whitewater investigation.

Mr Hubbell, Hillary Clinton's former law partner who served 18 months for fraud over Whitewater, is seen as a pivotal character linking many of the Clinton scandals, including the Lewinsky affair.



Thomas Foglietta, the American Ambassador in Italy, prays yesterday near Cavalese, where the cable-car crash killed 20 skiers

# Pentagon urges action on cable-car jet's crew

BY TOM RHODES

THE Pentagon last night recommended disciplinary action against the four-man crew of a Marine jet blamed for flying too low and fast when it severed a cable-car wire in the Italian Alps last month, sending 20 skiers plunging to their deaths.

American military investigators yesterday faulted the crew for "aggressive manoeuvring" of the EA-6B Prowler surveillance jet and also urged administrative action against at least five supervisors, including the squadron commander.

"The cause of the mishap was aircrew error," said Major-General Michael DeLong, president of the accident investigation board. "The aircrew aggressively manoeuvred their aircraft, exceeded the maximum air speed and flew well below the allowed limit."

The preliminary findings failed to establish either why the aircraft was being piloted recklessly or why flying 1,700ft below the authorised altitude of 2,000ft when it sliced through the cable-car wire at Cavalese in the Dolomites.

Since the incident on February 3, the crew have declined to be interviewed by investigators, invoking their legal right simply to submit a statement, as criminal proceedings are still possible in Italy.

# Hollywood love story offends island morality

THE traditional values of America's earliest British settlers re-emerged yesterday to reject Hollywood plans for the filming of a new romantic drama on a secluded island in Chesapeake Bay.

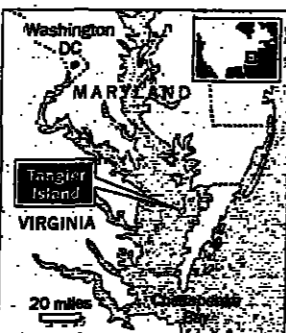
Warner Brothers had long been drawn to the crescent-shaped speck of Tangier Island, a quaint strip of land where many of the 700 inhabitants still speak a form of Cornish dialect.

A few months ago, location scouts from Hollywood observed the island by land, sea and helicopter and determined it was the ideal setting for filming a series of scenes for *Message in a Bottle*, a film starring Kevin Costner and Paul Newman. But yesterday members of Tangier Town Council viewed the script and, citing objectionable language and the incidence of sex and drinking, voted by a margin of six to nothing that Warner Brothers should either revise the screenplay or look elsewhere.

"Our town council is made up of Christian people. We just couldn't accept it," said Dewey Crockett, Mayor of Tangier and a descendant of the island's first settler.

He said a love scene involving Costner and Robin Wright Penn, combined with several shots in which wine and beer were to be served, would not help the island's efforts to warn children about safe sex, alcohol and drug abuse. Others on the town council could not condone the consistent use of the Lord's name in vain, which is prohibited on Tangier.

But some members of the



Christians who run the council on a small East Coast island are resisting studio advances, says Tom Rhodes

community feel the council's decision will not merely cheat the town of \$5,000 (£3,000) Warner had proposed for the use of public property but also affect profits at its restaurants, two bed-and-breakfasts and grocery store.

Beth Thomas, whose husband owns a waterfront property and various boats, which were to have been used to transport film crews, said: "We weren't going to get rich by any means, but it was going to help." She is among 200 islanders who have signed a petition asking the council to reconsider.

The studio said it accepted the council verdict about a film it described as a "poignant romantic drama" involving the relationship between a fisherman played by Costner and Robin Wright Penn's divorced single mother. Newman is playing the fisherman's father.

Tangier, which bills itself as the soft-shell crab capital of the world, has no cinema and so the film would not be shown on the island, but council members are still hopeful that Warner might bow to local sensitivity and edit the script.

"They would get a lot of positive publicity out of this if they changed it," said Betty Parks, one councillor. "I think a lot of small-town America and religious groups would like to be able to see a movie that has been cleaned up for the moral-minded family."



Penn shares a steamy scene with Costner

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# Luxury on tap

## Object of desire



Flowers continue to be a motif this summer on everything from dresses to beaded cardigans and tiny bags. If the winsome peasant girl look is too fussy, these orchid hairclips in lilac or white add a refreshing and realistic touch to sleek, sparse grey tailoring. Orchid hairclips, £20 for three by Jackson at Selina Blow, 32 Elizabeth Street SW1 (0171-730 2449).



### HOT TIP

If your lashes are not on top fluttering form, Beyond The Fringe by Origins, priced at £16, could help. A special dual-action lash building set, it contains Underwear For Lashes, a white pre-mascara that lengthens and thickens wimpy lashes, and Fringe Benefits, a mascara that doesn't flake or smudge. Note: Underwear For Lashes dries white, so to avoid the silbo look remember to apply the black mascara. Available from Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW3 (0171-730 1234 x3371).

## Why I could do with a good bath

The minute I set eyes on the place where I now live I knew that it was for me. It looked just like a house, only smaller. Four tiny little rooms, with working fireplaces, a midget kitchen, a steep little staircase, miniature rose bushes in the pocket-handkerchief garden — it was like a dolls' house that had decided to grow up into the real thing, but then changed its mind. The perfect refuge for a smallish woman and a very small baby.

The only thing was — no bath. There was a bathroom, of course, in wonderful taste, with white tongue-and-groove boarding, a pale stone floor, bleached wood and a shower with a handsome Czech & Speake shower rose. But nowhere to bath a baby. I looked at my son, and I looked at that dear little house, and I had an idea...

"We don't get much call for them," said the ironmonger. "Not for bathing people. Dogs, people use them for. And for plastering, I suppose I might have one cut the back." He did. It cost £24.

I bought it and, for the next five years bathtime in our house saw a nightly re-enactment of *Upstairs, Downstairs* starring Alexander as the young master, wallowing in his tin hip bath, and me as Ruby, the downtrodden maid of all work, lugging about the gallons of hot water required to fill it. Eventually, he got too big for it, and it retired (to my great relief) to the garden, where I daresay I shall keep coal in it.

And now we both have showers. There is a good deal to be said for a shower — invigorating, hygienic, economical. But there is also a lot that you can't do there: read a book, sip a submarine, have a chat, sip a glass of champagne, recover from a bloody day in a cloud of scented bath oil...

A really good bathroom, like a good kitchen, should be a social place. Some of my most intimate conversations with my son have taken place in the bathroom — but it would be nice if we could have them without one of us having to perch on the windowsill like a bird on a wire, and below above the sound of splashing water.

The most perfect bathroom I have ever seen was designed by the architect John Pawson, and contained nothing but water, stone and light: pale gold stone walls and floor, stone sarcophagus bath, a single, vast window. The trouble with this kind of perfection is that it takes just one plastic dinosaur to destroy it. If Alexander and I are to share a bathroom, I fear I must sacrifice my love of the extremely simple, and fall back on my other passion — the extremely fancy.

The Edwardians, who were particularly good at combining innovative technology with extravagant decoration, designed the most wonderful bathrooms — cavernous chambers, full of monumentally comfortable furniture, containing serpentine miracles of plumbing that would spout, on demand, jets of water, hot

or cold, salt or fresh, at all kinds of unexpected angles.

If you would want to reproduce these sanitary excesses of Sir Philip Sassoon at Port Lympne (red marble, carved lion masks) or Lord Bute at Cardiff Castle (alabaster, ornamented with metal sea creatures), then Czech & Speake is probably the place to go. At their showroom in Jermyn Street a charming Brazilian (who contradicts the dreary English rule that the grander the shop, the more disagreeable the service) blasts a demonstration shower cabinet that has scalding jets from all directions.

There are beautiful chrome fittings, a solid mahogany loo seat with a little gold handle, and a vast, claw-footed bath with a plugless waste pipe which creates, according to the catalogue, "a flat surface ideal for bathing *doux*..." There are also colognes, soaps, bath oils and burning sticks. The mimosa is probably the most delicious bath thing that I have ever smelt — even better than Floris's favourite until now.

Back in the real world, if you cannot afford to spend a year's salary on a new bathroom, there are alternatives: a bowl of white hyacinths on a windowsill, a pile of snowy bath sheets.

White Company, a comfortable chair (Habitat does a pale blonde wicker one at £169, though I do wish I could have the Harvey Nichols silver-lacquered, swan-necked, cream-upholstered empire-style armchair, £795). Habitat also has a very handsome silver-framed mirror, £65, and an elegant chrome and frosted-glass cabinet with a mirrored interior, £95.

People who think, as my son does, that bathrooms ought to be entertaining should pay a visit to the General Trading Company on Sloane Street. Alexander was particularly keen on the decoy duck soap holders, £22, and the bleached wood "barge" shelf, £44, on which one could put Margaret Howell's pretty, Frenchified range of bath products, including a huge blue glass bottle of rose bath essence, £25, or a chunk of  *savon de Marseille*, £4.50.

A perfect Mother's Day present (Alexander, I hope that you are reading this) would be the GTC's pale blue velvet trinket box, embroidered with a classical wreath in silver thread, £26 — or perhaps one of its spiky glass and silver scent bottles, £18.

And if, one of these days, we find ourselves with the unimaginable luxury of two bathrooms, I think I might install in Alexander's, along with the Dinosaur Slime, bubblegum-flavoured toothpaste and bantay-powered nuclear submachine, John Lewis's extraordinary loo seat, the ultimate schoolboy lavatory joke. It features, safely embedded in clear acrylic, a jolly scattering of multi-coloured drawing pins...

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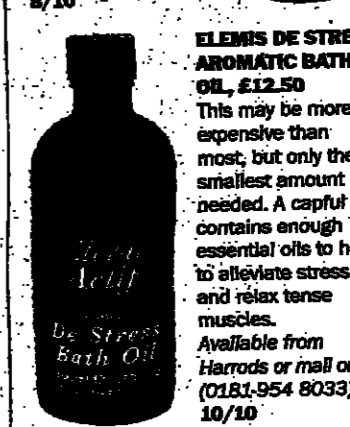
Bath oils can help you to relax. So soak away your aches, pains and worries with our six of the best bath oils



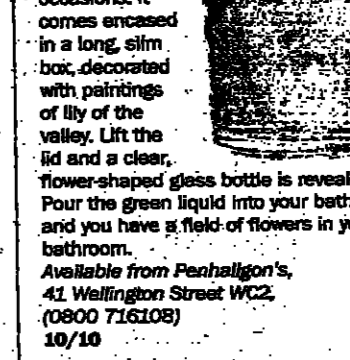
**BATH PHASE AROMATHERAPY BATH OIL, £7.50**  
These oils come in blues for refreshment, reds for sensual and lilacs for relaxation. The bottle has to be shaken vigorously, which you feel both to do as the oils look incredibly beautiful in their three coloured tiers. Available from House of Fraser Stores (01692 513088) 10/10



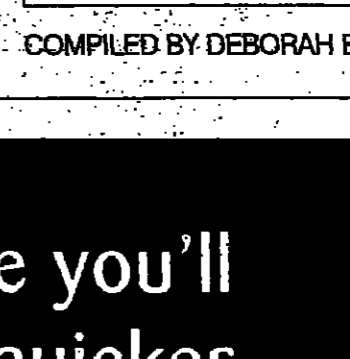
**BODYSHOP ORANGE CREAM BATH OIL, £2.25**  
A great mixture of moisturising oils, which makes the bath water turn creamy and your bathroom smell of sweet citrus. Available from The Body Shop (01903 731500) 9/10



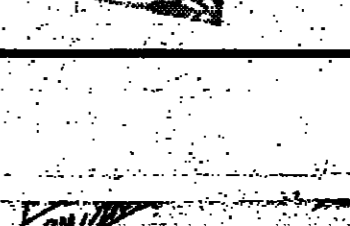
**MOLTON BROWN SENSUAL FOAMING BATH OIL, £14**  
This fiery orange bath oil not only moisturises but foams and fills the bathroom with fragrance, while claiming to be sensual to boot. For mail order and stockists telephone: (0171-625 6550) 8/10



**ELEMENTS DE STRESS AROMATIC BATH OIL, £12.50**  
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**PENHALIGON'S LILY OF THE VALLEY BATH OIL, £29**  
The packaging is so breathtaking, this bath oil should probably be used only on special occasions. It comes encased in a long, slim box, decorated with paintings of lily of the valley. Lift the lid and a clear, flower-shaped glass bottle is revealed. Pour the green liquid into your bath and you have a field of flowers in your bathroom. Available from Penhaligon's, 41 Wellington Street WC2, (0200 716108) 10/10



**LUSH FLYING SAUCERS, £4.75**  
A honey bath oil with essential oils, this smells sweeter than honey, although to some it might be a tad sticky. The essential oils are extremely soothing and help the body to relax. Available from Lush (01202 668545) 8/10



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# Bonds, bonus numbers and le mouchoir-pouchoir



MAN ON TOP  
JOE JOSEPH

**N**ext Tuesday, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer presents his annual Budget, is obviously one of the most keenly awaited days in the political calendar for many journalists. This is on account of the fact that the Budget gives even lowly hacks in the features, foreign news, sports and arts sections — men and women who traditionally don't get a chance to analyse Treasury policy — a once-in-a-year opportunity to go home early, thereby allowing members of the newspaper's business and political staffs free rein of the newspaper to compile their special "Budget" edition.

But why is it actually called a budget? Many people still think it is because Robert Walpole used to have his papers taken to the House in a leather bag, known as a "budget", a corruption of the French *bougiate*. But we now know that the word in fact comes from the Latin *budget*, meaning "financially speaking" and et meaning "this lot are just as clueless as the Tories".

Which is why my own annual list of "pre-Budget tips" has become almost as hallowed a tradition as the Budget itself. Indeed, many people have come to rely solely on these nuggets of budgetary wisdom for financial guidance — in particular, once-carefree youths who have risen over the years to very senior positions in the "Legalise... Um... What is it? ... Oh yeah... Cannabis. Now!" campaign.

This year's tips include:

**Taxes:** Taxation has been with us since the year 991, when Ethelred the Unready introduced the Danegeld, an annual tax of two shillings per man demanded by the King for the defence of the realm. This established the principle that every adult citizen should pay something towards the com-

mon good — but no more than was absolutely necessary to fund vital national needs such as an army, reducing unemployment, raising educational standards and redecorating the Lord Chancellor's private apartments. But the Treasury is far from a heartless financial leech. It is even possible that, having completed your tax return, you find the Inland Revenue actually owes you money; this is a fiscal position technically known among accountants as "being Geoffrey Robinson".

The NHS: The Chancellor is determined to contain the ballooning costs of the NHS. The phrase "NHS lottery" was once used to symbolise underfunding of the service and long waiting lists for hip operations. No more. Under new Labour's new-style lottery-funded NHS, everyone will be entitled to a hip replacement or heart transplant — provided that day's readings for their

pulse, heartbeat, cholesterol level, blood pressure and body temperature match those picked at random every morning by Frank Dobson. Ties will be decided by a "bonus number" — bodyweight reading. It could be you!

**Money supply:** This can be baffling. The Chancellor might say that money is too cheap, or too expensive. But going into NatWest after Budget Day, slapping £4.50 on the counter and asking the teller for a cheap £5 note will get you arrested. Apparently money is cheap only if you are dealing in bulk. For some of Britain's big commercial banks, which have been lending billions to crumbling economies in Latin America and South-East Asia, or to Eurotunnel, money is almost valueless.

Europe: Britain's Budgets are adopting a more continental flavor. For example, it is well known that the Government has been studying the French tax code for an alternative to certain UK excise duties. UK Treasury officials discovered that whereas Britain once had window taxes to stop Britons enjoying a view of street riots, the French once had a bedroom tax to discourage hanky-panky (*le taxe contre le mouchoir-pouchoir*). This has given Gordon Brown ideas for settling some old scores with the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook.

Bonds: I must make clear that it is crucial for the financial wellbeing of the country that there should always be a firm relationship between bonds and yields, though it need not be comprehensible to you, me or even the Chancellor.

The Environment, Welfare, Agriculture: The Government will create a new super-ministry to coordinate its "right to roam" policy.

Every Briton (except students in arrears with fees) will be entitled to roam freely over single mothers, anti-fashun! campaigners, and beef farmers — unless they would prefer to drive over them in a Formula One racing car (flicking cigarette ash out of the window as they pass).

Planned change in Budget Day: The Budget is traditionally delivered on a Tuesday because, in older days, MPs representing constituencies in the faraway fens of Britain found it tricky to be in the House by Monday, horses being what they are. Now, of course, we have a privatised train service, and the modern-minded Chancellor — being anxious to keep up with the times — has thus decided to change Budget Day. So because of travel problems caused by hopelessly unreliable rail services, Budget Day will in future be delayed to a Wednesday.

# How to be a cool cat

They work out, diet and grab attention at all the best parties. Grace Bradberry follows the feline in-crowd

**I**t used to be babies. No self-respecting fashion groupie was properly accessorised without an infant to dangle, or at least a photograph of a suitably poised and cherubic child. But babies are passé. This week at the Paris shows it has become obvious that the hottest designer accessory is the cat. The feline has arrived, it seems, sucked into the vortex of fashionable living.

At one essential party, the excitement of two members of the fashion pack had to be seen to be believed as they discovered that they shared the same vet. "Oh, has he put yours on the Hills Science Diet?" inquired one. "Oh yes, and he's also in a cancer trial," replied the other.

brushes and poultry-flavoured pastes with flouride. The Hills Science Diet is a must. As one soignée friend told me: "It costs a fortune and you have to hold your breath when you open it, but the great thing is that your cat's breath won't smell afterwards."

It doesn't end there. Virtually every alternative medicine available to human beings is now also available to cats — osteopathy, homoeopathy, herbalism, even aromatherapy and massage. Another member of the fashion cognoscenti, who lives in Notting Hill, recalls with humour a particularly bleak time: "I had the flu, my boyfriend had broken his leg, the cat had had the snip and

open-minded. If the owner thinks it's working, that may be communicated to the cat, which might do some good."

His practice does use osteopathy and massage, and he is sparing in his use of drugs: "I've never used steroids on a cat unless it had cancer, and I'm a big campaigner against the overuse of steroids and antibiotics." His main credo is that a full diagnosis should precede any treatment.

According to Hatton, however, some of the current vogue in cat treatment are simply hokum. "People use garlic tablets to get rid of fleas. I think you just end up with fleas with bad breath."

While North London cats may be holistic, their Kensington counterparts are somewhat more refined. One cannot imagine fleas and bad breath daring to penetrate the environs of WS, and it is here that one of the swiftest of pet emporiums can be found — Animal Fair. This is the Harrods of pet shops, selling Canac Cat Aerobic Centres costing anything from £20 to £100, organic catnip at £2 a bag, and Ticklers — sticks decorated with flamboyant feathers. The shop also stocks a good range of herbal remedies by Denes.



Purr crazy: the latest fashion accessory is a furry bundle with whiskers and a tail

we were all on homoeopathic remedies — the only one who looked truly happy about it was the cat."

Of course, not all vets subscribe to such things. Word soon spreads about the progressive ones and they can become, in effect, society vets. Russell Hatton, the principal of Canonbury veterinary practice in Islington, is one such, although he is wary of what he sees as the lunatic fringe in petcare, and spends some of his time preaching basic common sense to owners.

"There is certainly a trend towards more natural approaches," he says. "I look at it from the point of view of one urban animal, us, looking after another urban animal, the cat. A lot of us are trying to go back to those foods for which evolution designed us — fresh, unprocessed foods — and I've tried to take the same approach with cats."

Hatton recommends the Hills Science Diet. "We live in an industrialised society and we have to give our pets industrial food." But his hot tip is that cats should be given raw chicken wings three times a week. "Clients tend to worry about the bones, and they also ask about salmonella, but I tease people by saying 'when did you last see a cat barbecuing and filleting their prey?' Cats are designed to eat raw meat, and it helps to shift the gunk from their teeth."

Homoeopathy is something he would only use for basically healthy cats. "The jury's still out on homoeopathy. I'm very

**They like to get stoned on imported organic catnip**

Whatever happened to fast living and an early death and an early death beneath the wheels of a Ford Capri? There are now cliques of cats in postcodes such as N1 and W11 for whom a tin of Whiskas and a ping-pong ball are just not good enough. They eat "natural" foods, work out in specially designed aerobic centres, and like to get stoned on organic catnip, imported from America. Damien Hirst has not yet designed a restaurant for these metropolitan mogs, but it can only be a matter of time before they are wangling down free-range chicken next to a goldfish in formaldehyde.

The days are numbered when a cat could drink full-fat milk and gain his exercise from torturing birds and mice. Even when owners go on holiday, their precious charges are not left "home alone". Rather than rely on a neighbour to pop in and feed the cat, one banker friend of mine pays a cat-sitter to move in and keep a watchful eye on her, significantly furry other.

Under such surveillance, there is little chance of sneaking down the road for a spot of quiet scavenging, with the result that rotting fish followed by carcass of chicken is a forbidden treat for many affluent cats.

Even your average middle-class mog now costs a fortune to bring up. Beyond the simple flu jab, they are routinely given a junkie's ration of injections. Their teeth are scaled regularly, and some owners invest in tiny tooth-

This is far from being solely a London phenomenon, however. Howard Taylor, a vet in Salisbury, will suggest homoeopathic remedies to owners who express an interest. "I don't offer them unless people ask because the cat will take a lot longer to respond. Give a cat an antibiotic and you will often see a response by the next day."

Natural remedies can help with anxiety or pain. "Rescue remedy is often used for fear. Homoeopathy is used around birth to help to ease the pain." Taylor has also found that cats respond well to Bach Flower Remedies, but he is wary of promoting alternative medicines too enthusiastically. "Tea-tree oil has become very fashionable as a remedy for flea allergies," he says. "But we have some concerns about the safety of that."

Yet while English cats may be embracing New Age lifestyles, they are reluctant to abandon their traditional pursuits. Taylor's cat, for example, is a blood sports enthusiast, keeping himself healthy on a regular diet of rabbits caught on Salisbury Plain.

# Girls with the figures that interest men

Men marry women for their money, not their bodies, says Rachel Morris

**L**ately a terrible suspicion has taken hold among some of my friends. In the past year three women that we know (or know of) have caught (or kept) the man they want by first getting a well-paid job.

After years of berating men for preferring our bodies over our minds, the awful thought has occurred that they may really be interested in an even less elevated prospect — our earning potential (although I have to say that the bigger a woman's salary the less shocking she finds this discovery).

Almost as disconcerting has been the response of another friend. "Well, of course," she said, "do you mean you hadn't noticed? And anyway, isn't that how women have been choosing men since the world began?" It makes me feel like a scientist who's just discovered their lifetime's research has been misdirected.

As it now takes oodles of money (or at least two salaries) to sustain a household, it would be surprising if men didn't set up home with a canny eye to their partner's salary. What's more, since the numbers of women earning more than their partners has gone up from one in fifteen in the early Eighties to one in five, and rising, it is really just as well that men are learning to love us for our money.

And yet it is enough to make the romantics among us yearn for those glory days when men pursued women for such high-minded concepts as the shape of our mouths and the length of our legs.

These days we think of wealth as based on income, not capital, and so women who earn high salaries are our modern-day heiresses. Of the three heiresses I know who have been pursued for their incomes, one is so pleased to have got her man she's not worrying how she did it; the second (who is doubly attractive because she has an income

and a loft extension) now feels so disillusioned she can hardly go through with the relationship — "I want to be loved for my body," she wails; and the third (a friend of mine) is also upset, because she had been going to switch to a less well-paid career.

She says you can always tell a man who loves your job better than your body because the faintest suggestion that you are going to give it up will prompt him to agonised protests. Like a fairytale princess, she wants to test his love, although I tell her not to worry because a test will present itself soon when she wants a baby. "Whatever way you do motherhood — by staying at home or going back to work — there is always less disposable income afterwards."

And the trouble with wealth based on income rather than capital is that it is precarious, especially after the birth of a child. No wonder having children in our society is so fraught with argument.

**T**he truth is we are all, men and women, hopelessly muddled about money. Men may be giving up their primitive wish to earn more than their partners, but many women that I know, while wanting to earn lots of money themselves, still want their partners to earn even more (as a recent survey in *Harpers & Queen* of wealthy single women revealed).

All of which has set me thinking about Cinderella who, whatever other crosses she had to bear, at least knew exactly why her prince loved her. It may be that only romantic men will marry poor girls — in which case, ironically enough, it will be poor girls who get the best partners. (Or, as Fay Weldon once said in similar vein, fat girls marry a better class of man.) It really is enough to make you think: come back, Prince Charming, all is forgiven.

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NOW, AND WE WONY'T WE HIT THE TARGET

SO WHAT DID THE WIFE SAY?

SHE SAID...

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COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE March 12: The Queen today received Fellows participating in the Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship Scheme...

to the Republic of Ghana (His Excellency Mr Ian Mackley) at the Residence. Her Royal Highness afterwards visited the Baby Care Programme...



Pupils at Paul Mitchell's primary school form a human train and give him the green flag to change jobs

Head finds his true station in life

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES A PRIMARY school headmaster is changing tracks in mid-career to become a station master.

where I was getting fed up with teaching. It means I can enjoy my hobby and be paid for it. My real interest is railway architecture...

miss the children. I have always thought of them as part of my wider family. I'm not sure that the trains have such wonderful personalities.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of York, as Patron, Round Square, will visit the Round Square European regional conference at Wellington College, Berkshire, at 3.00.

Service dinners

RN College Greenwich Rear-Admiral J.H.S. McNally, Flag Officer Training and Recruiting, will be the principal guest at a royal special night dinner...

University news

Oxford Somerville College The following elections have been agreed: To a Ball Exhibition in Classics...

Dinners

Science Museum The Right Hon Chris Smith, MP, was Guest of Honour and Principal Speaker at the Annual Dinner of the Science Museum...

Calls to the Bar

Inner Temple D A W Llewellyn, Brentwood; E D L Samuel, London NW8; A S Hoopston, London SE4; U D Regional, Barnet; C Shaw, Colchester; A C J Yale, London W11; J Mitchell, Bourne...

Birthdays today

Baroness Amos, 44; Mr Walter Annenberg, 84; Mr Robert Mark, former Commissioner, Metropolitan Police; Sir Raymond Bell, former vice-president, European Commission...

Church news

Appointments The Rev John Pann, Curate, Sherborne to Castleton and Lillington (Salisbury); to be Succentor, Southwark Cathedral...

Memorial services

Miss Elizabeth Ballour The Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire attended a service of celebration for the life and work of Miss Elizabeth Ballour...

Forthcoming marriages

Mr L.J. Clarke and Miss L. Wood The engagement is announced between Lee, elder son of Mr and Mrs Ian Clarke, of Fernhill Heath, Worcestershire...

Marriage

Mr R.J.A. Cole and Miss P.J. Easton The marriage took place in Oxford, on March 7, between Robert, only son of Mr and Mrs Bernard Cole, of Corsham, Wiltshire...

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Joseph Priestley, clergyman and scientist, Bristol, Yorkshire, 1733; Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, Prime Minister 1830-34...

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DEATHS: SWALLOW - On March 7th at the age of 82, Mrs Joan Swallow, nee Jones, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

DEATHS: HANDELL - Trevor, peacefully on 5th March, aged 70, beloved husband and friend of Mrs Joan Handell...

DEATHS: MURPHY - Una, (nee Stuchell), aged 78, wife of the late John Murphy, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

DEATHS: MATHIAS - Elizabeth Dorothy (nee Sealey) wife of David Mathias, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

DEATHS: WALTER - Barbara Anne (nee Gode), aged 94, widow of the late Walter Gode, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

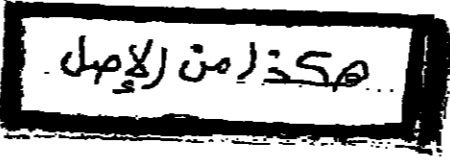
DEATHS: WOODS - Col. Jack Williams, aged 82, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

DEATHS: WOODS - Col. Jack Williams, aged 82, of 15, The Gables, Bournemouth...

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NEWS

Ulster peace 'agonisingly close'

Sinn Féin was set to rejoin the Northern Ireland peace talks after a meeting between Tony Blair and Gerry Adams ended with the Prime Minister claiming that a peace settlement was "agonisingly close".

Deadline for Armageddon?

Apocalypse could be just 30 years away. Astronomers have identified an asteroid a mile across on a near-collision course with Earth. On October 26, 2028, at 6.30pm GMT, XF11 will pass within 30,000 miles of Earth — a hair's breadth in astronomical terms.

Paedophile warning

A national strategy is needed to cope with dangerous paedophiles, six of whom will be released from jail without any supervision during the next two years.

Man heartbroken

Colin Hunter, 60, is bereft after his wife died this week in a road accident. His two children were killed in separate road accidents in the 1970s.

'Not cricket'

The embattled England Cricket Board admitted it took a calculated risk not to contest a sex discrimination case brought by a former secretary in the hope of containing the damage.

Hatch was unsecured

An inquiry into the sinking of the MV Derbyshire heard that a key cause of the 1980 disaster was the loss of 41 lives was a small unsecured bow hatch.

Dine and wine

Downing Street has appealed to ministers to stop leaking stories to journalists over their charity lunches.

Bumpy landing

An evangelist who had planned to preach to the people of Salisbury from the air by megaphone was fined £1,050 by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Fayed offers to help

Mohamed Al Fayed made peace with the Paris magistrate investigating the deaths of his son Dodi and Diana, Princess of Wales, after his claims that the car accident was the result of a conspiracy.

Teenage pregnancies

The number of under-age girls becoming pregnant is at the highest level in more than a decade. The latest figures show that 8,800 girls under 16 became pregnant in 1996.

Bard's play too 'racist' for teachers

A survey of teachers in 12 countries show that up to 40 per cent believe Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice is anti-Semitic. Objectors said the drama could have a damaging influence on pupils, or would raise issues too complex to resolve for teenagers.



José María Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister, greets the Queen at a European Conference reception at Buckingham Palace.

BUSINESS

Aerospace: The Government is to raise the limit on foreign ownership of British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce to a fraction under 50 per cent.

John Lewis: The supermarkets and department stores group is to share a £98 million profit bonus among 37,000 workers after lifting profits by 13 per cent to £250 million last year.

On the prowl: Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing and information group, is considering a number of key acquisitions after the failure of its proposed merger with Wolters Kluwer.

Markets: The FTSE 100 index fell to 5794.8. Sterling's index rose to 106.5 after a rise to \$1.6527 and to DM3.0283.

Cricket: Captain Michael Atherton was dismissed playing a rash shot on the first morning of the fifth Test match in Barbados as England struggled after being put in to bat.

Football: Arsenal are attempting to solve their ground problems by attempting to buy Wembley Stadium.

Rugby union: Dean Ryan, whose last appearance for England was four years ago, has been called into the squad for the Calcutta Cup match against Scotland later this month.

Golf: Des Smyth emerged as an unlikely first-round leader of the Moroccan Open after a strong wind forced a suspension in play.

Orchestrated protest: "Our concert life is more depressed than I can recall in 20 years of reporting it" — Richard Morrison on the plight of our orchestras.

Little stars: Pop star Aaron Jackson is busy on a concert tour of South-East Asia as his latest single heads for the Top Ten. He is ten years old.

Pop albums: David Sinclair reviews the latest from the once legendary Simple Minds. Plus Caitlin Moran on the way fate dictates how we go down in history.

Rich books: The shortlist for the world's biggest literary prize — the £100,000 IMPAC Dublin Literary Award — was announced this week. But where is the hype, the controversy?

Hot baths: "A really good bathroom, like a good kitchen, should be a social place... some of my most intimate conversations have taken place there."

Felina groovy: Grace Bradbury, Style Editor, reports on the elevation to fashion accessory of the humble cat.

Joe Joseph: A few golden nuggets of budgetary wisdom.

Figures: Men marry women for the money, not their bodies, says Rachel Morris.

Raising standards: Does a sixth form raise standards throughout a school? New research suggests so.

They [international mediators] must also understand how difficult it is for the Greek Cypriot side to act in good faith towards the Turkish Cypriots and make generous conciliatory gestures when [Rauf Denktaş leader of the Turkish north] has been happily waving the two-fingered salute for more than 20 years.

Sydney Gruson, journalist; Commander Clive Guinness, wartime convoy escort commander; Sir Stephen Brown, industrialist.

Baroness Lester and others call for a new Adoption Bill, voting reform, damage to fragile works of art, release of Roisin McAliskey: Friday the 13th.

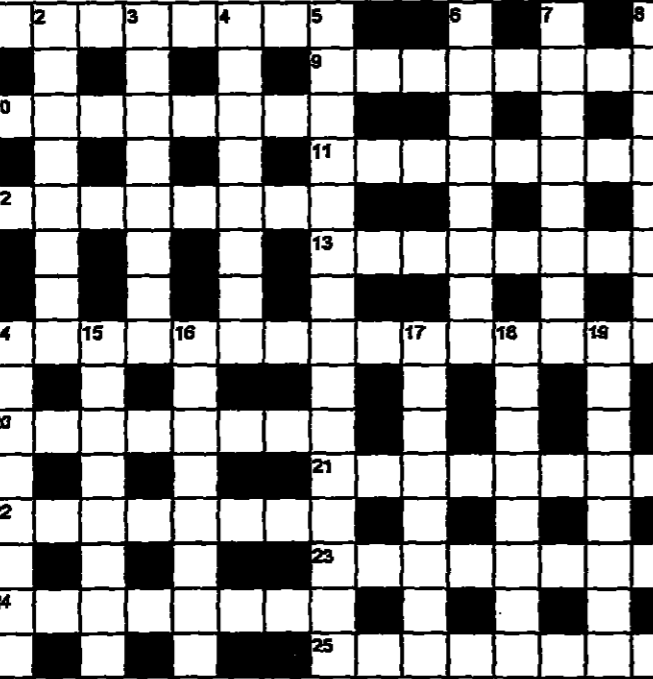


TOMORROW IN THE SATURDAY TIMES

SPURRED ON David Ginola: How I learnt to love discipline

JONATHAN MEADES My verdict on the Pharmacy

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,738



- Crossword clues including: 1 On entrance, block attempt to get interview (8); 9 Trespass, fence being extremely deficient to fish (8); 10 Special British and European comics taken by cheat (8); 11 Sort of book with chances of promotion to number one (4-4); 12 Stage magician to get on must join circle (8); 13 Coach's left man team (8); 14 Like Holmes's face, if he'd failed to solve this? (1,5,2,7); 20 Writer with badge worn entered military HQ (8); 21 Line study with books on this? (8); 22 Not so smart, if more self-conscious, to imbibe rum (8); 23 Maintain child, concealing one's dislike (8); 24 Rat has to go off and hide (8); 25 Record collector gives girl a catalogue (8).

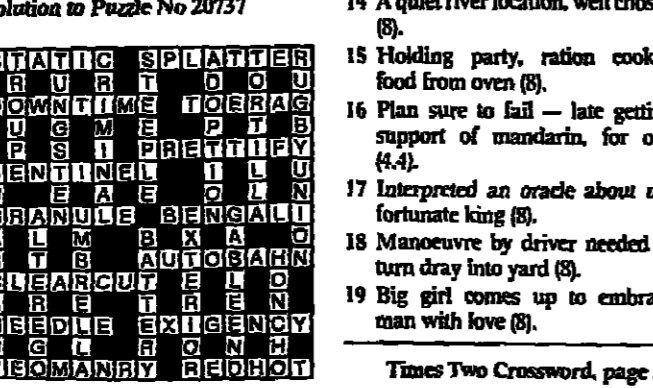


Table with weather conditions for various UK regions.

Table with weather by fax for various UK regions.

Table with World City Weather for various international cities.

Table with motorway reports by fax for various UK roads.

Table with hours of darkness for various UK locations.

General: milder everywhere, dry in many places. There will be a lot of cloud, but south-east Scotland and southern and north-eastern England will see a little sunshine.

London, SE England, E Anglia, East S England, Midlands: dry drizzle soon petering out then cloudy with a few sunny breaks. Moderate NW wind. Max 10-13C (50-55F).

E England, Central N England, NE England: cloudy but mild with some sunny breaks. Moderate NW wind. Max 11-12C (52-54F).

Channel Isles, SW England, Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, N Ireland: localised drizzle and a lot of cloud, but a few parts brightening up. Moderate NW wind. Max 11-12C (52-54F).

Borders, SW Scotland, Glasgow: cloudy but mostly dry with some sunny breaks. Moderate NW wind. Max 10-12C (50-54F).

Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Orkney, Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: cloudy with some drizzle or light rain. Moderate to fresh NW wind. Max 8-11C (46-52F).

Republic of Ireland: drizzle in north and west. Brighter inland and mostly dry. Wind NW moderate, mild. Max 11C (52F).

Outlook: staying mild and mostly dry, some drizzle in north.

Table with temperatures at midday local time on Wednesday.

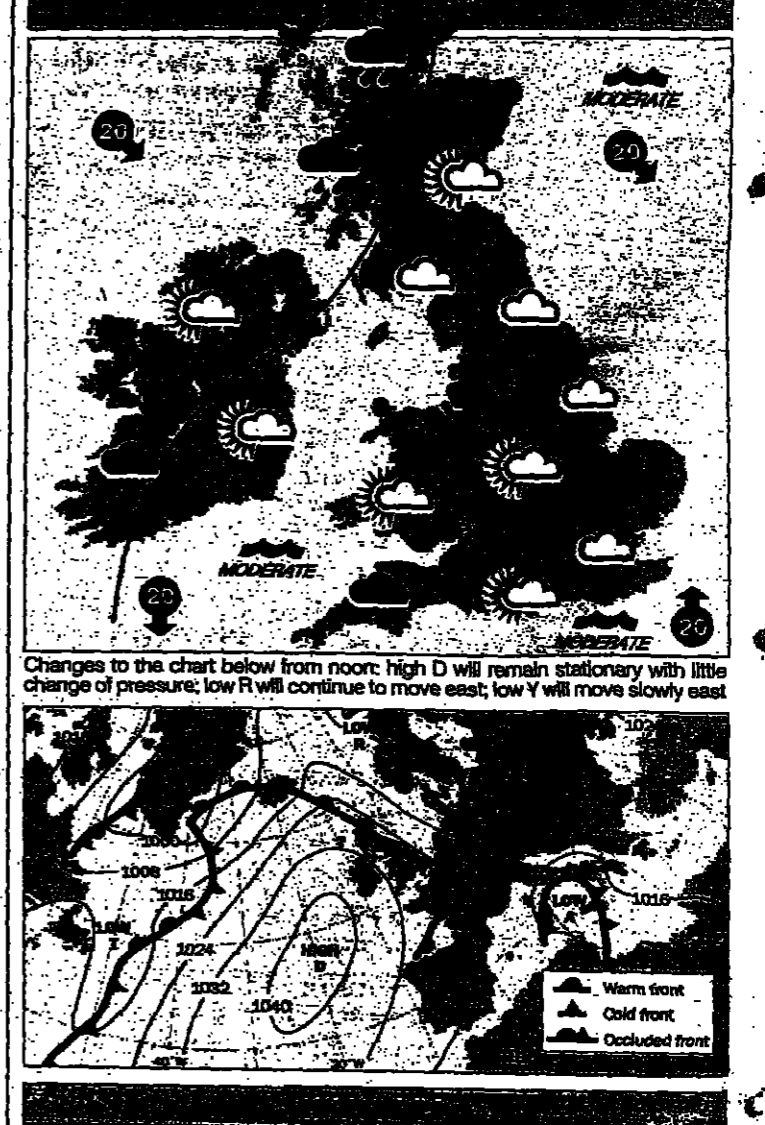


Table with today's weather forecasts for various UK cities.

# THE TIMES

# 2

INSIDE SECTION  
**2**  
TODAY



**ARTS**  
André Brink: on the shortlist for fiction's biggest prize  
PAGES 35-38



**MEDIA**  
Betrayed by Blair?  
The pop music counter-revolution  
PAGES 39-42



**SPORT**  
Atherton's men facing uphill task in Barbados Test  
PAGES 46-52

**TELEVISION AND RADIO**  
PAGES 50, 51

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY MARCH 13 1998

## Executives could be barred over mis-sold pensions

By CAROLINE MERRILL

SENIOR executives and managers could be barred from working in financial services if their companies fail to meet new deadlines for resolving the pensions mis-selling scandal. The threat came as the Financial Services Authority, the new super-regulator, confirmed that the total cost of settling the mis-selling scandal could be between £3.3 billion and

£11 billion, more than twice the original estimate of £4 billion. Roger Bright, chief executive of the Personal Investment Authority, which is working alongside the FSA, said senior management of the UK's biggest financial services companies were applying for individual membership of the PIA. He said: "We have the opportunity of vetting individuals. Where it is justified, we can take action against

individuals who have been slow in tackling the pensions review. It is possible that senior managers and directors could be in the frame." Executives have until May to register membership with the PIA. Mr Bright's warning came as the FSA announced the second stage of the pensions review, which aims to find up to 1.8 million people who may have been encouraged to give up rights to their company schemes

in order to take out personal pensions. The FSA also unveiled plans for television advertising campaign to find the victims. The financial services companies are already grappling to compensate the 500,000 pension cases that came under the first stage of the review, which dealt with priority cases — the dead and the aged. The second stage will focus on those who were under 35 when they bought a

pension. The review relates to pensions sold between 1988 and 1994. Howard Davies, FSA chairman, refused to be drawn on a deadline for companies to deal with phase two, but said: "We would expect the greater part of the review to be completed by the millennium." Companies that have dealt with less than half their priority cases include DBS, the UK's biggest network of financial advisers, whose

chief executive is Ken Davy, and Abbey Life, owned by Lloyds TSB, whose chief executive is Peter Ellwood. Those that have resolved between 50 and 75 per cent of cases include Friends Provident, whose chief executive is Keith Satchell; Standard Life, whose chief executive is Scott Bell; and CIS, whose chief general manager is David Hollas.

Commentary, page 29

### BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	5794.8 (-35.0)
Yield	2.81%
FTSE All share	2709.70 (-8.80)
Nikkei	16575.22 (-180.92)
New York	2,482.93 (-24.50)
Dow Jones	8642.82 (-33.13)
S&P Composite	1088.81 (-1.86)

BOND RATE	
Federal Funds	5.75% (5.75)
Long Bond	103.75% (102.75)
Yield	5.87% (5.94%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-mth Interbank	7.75% (7.75)
Life long gilt	106.75 (107.1)
future (Jun)	106.75 (107.1)

DOLLAR	
London	1.8273 (1.8307)
DM	6.1260 (6.1515)
SP	1.6820 (1.6820)
Yen	129.25 (129.40)
S Index	106.2 (106.3)

MONTHLY SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (May)	\$19.20 (\$19.20)

LONDON COMMODITY	
London close	\$294.05 (\$295.35)

\* denotes midday trading price

## Limit on overseas stakes in BAe and R-R lifted

By ADAM JONES

FOREIGN investors will be allowed to own almost 50 per cent of British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce after the Government moved to ease restrictions on overseas shareholdings after fierce lobbying by both companies. Rolls-Royce shares rose nearly 6 per cent to 270.7p, close to a five-year high, on the news, with BAe rising 20p to £19.35, at the prospect of a surge in foreign buying led by US investors. It also raises the possibility of both companies offering equity stakes to customers or partners as a means of cementing business overseas.

Foreigners are currently allowed to own only 29.5 per cent of each company. Both are close to these thresholds. Yesterday, John Battie, the Industry Minister, said this would be raised to 49.5 per cent. A written answer to a parliamentary question said: "These changes are designed to promote the competitiveness of these companies by increasing their freedom to operate commercially in world markets."

Foreign investors are still limited to owning 15 per cent each. The Government will also retain its "golden share" in both companies, which gives it a degree of control over ownership and the composition of the board. The Government move has to be backed by shareholders of both companies at annual meetings in April and May. Nominally, the restrictions hold until then, but the foreign holdings may creep above 29.5 per cent since it would be impractical to enforce until the annual meeting decision. Rolls-Royce said: "The previous restriction damaged shareholder value. It removed an area of demand for our shares."

The limit was last raised in 1989, from 15 per cent. A DTI spokeswoman said the new increase would give the companies a greater ability to forge international alliances in increasingly globalised industries. She denied that the UK's position in the forthcoming consolidation of European aerospace, when the state domination of the French industry will be a major issue, was weakened as a result: "I don't think we would use some of our best companies as bargaining tools."



Analysts are not yet sure whether BAe and its Airbus partners, Aerospatiale and Dassault, will submit one proposal, or three. Airbus itself is being restructured along the lines of a stand-alone company, as opposed to its current consortium status, which complicates matters. Any plans to use the new Airbus entity as the core of a single European civil and defence aircraft company could encounter problems, since BAe has much more in the way of non-Airbus assets to contribute than Aerospatiale. Rolls-Royce is less likely to be caught up in a wave of European restructuring, since it has established itself as the only major European aero-engine maker.



Stuart Hampson said: "We expect this to be a year of squalls rather than windfalls. I'm just cautioning against any expectations of spectacular growth"

By FRASER NELSON

JOHN LEWIS, the Waitrose supermarkets and department store group, is to share a £98 million profit bonus among its 37,000 workers after lifting profits by 13 per cent to £250 million last year.

## Lewis staff share £98m

teriorate this year, as the benefit of building society windfalls subsidies and higher mortgage rates take their toll. Stuart Hampson, chairman, said the company would be happy if it managed to maintain profits at last year's

levels. He said: "We expect this to be a year of squalls rather than windfalls. I'm just cautioning against any expectations of spectacular growth." Since the new year, sales growth at John Lewis's department stores has

declined from 3.4 per cent in January to 3.1 per cent for the last week in February — the lowest weekly figure for more than a year. It has set aside £13.5 million to deal with updating its computers to cope with the millennium bug. Staff were reminded that the bonus will be the last that enjoys the full benefit of tax relief on profit-related pay schemes.

## Biotech in turmoil as Millar is suspended

By PAUL DURMAN

BRITISH BIOTECH, the leader among the UK's emerging biopharmaceutical companies, was facing a crisis of confidence last night after it suspended Andy Millar, its director of clinical research. The company said it was investigating allegations that Dr Millar had been discussing its research with outsiders — which would be a breach of his terms of employment. With direct responsibility for the trials of British Biotech's cancer and pancreatitis drugs, Dr Millar has access to the company's most commercially sensitive information. Although British Biotech insisted that its trials of marimastat and Zacutax were

unaffected, its shares fell heavily in late trading. They ended the day at 70p, having fallen almost 20 per cent. They were worth 270p at one point last year. One suggestion was that Dr Millar had become disaffected after failing to win the job of development director, which was recently filled by Peter Jensen. Yesterday Dr Millar said: "It's very easy for them to make the case that I am a disgruntled and disaffected employee. Events over the next few weeks will prove to people that that is not the case." He added: "I have been very careful to keep everything inside the company. I am working in everybody's long-

term interests, as I always have done." Dr Millar said he was unable to discuss the reasons for his suspension, having been warned of possible legal action by the company. He was suspended on Tuesday by Malcolm Fallon, finance director. Keith McCullagh, chief executive, is on business in the US. James Noble, British Biotech's respected former finance director, who played squash with Dr Millar yesterday, strongly defended his integrity. He said: "Andy Millar is the most straightforward and honest bloke you could ever hope to come across. I would regard [this] as a self signal."



Blunkett: skills help

## Britain wins EU funds of £160m

BRITAIN has won £160 million from European funds to support lifelong learning and other Government efforts to raise skills levels in the economy. David Blunkett, Education and Employment Secretary, will announce today. This is the first time that Britain has obtained money from Objective 4 of the European Social Fund. British lead, page 31

## Reed Elsevier to size up bid targets

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

REED ELSEVIER, the Anglo-Dutch international publishing and information group, said yesterday it was considering a number of significant acquisitions in the wake of the failure of its proposed merger with Wolters Kluwer. Nigel Stapleton, the Reed Elsevier co-chairman, said possible targets included the legal and medical publishing businesses of Times Mirror in America, valued at about \$1 billion (£600 million). Mr Stapleton said: "We didn't come out of the abandonment wondering what to do next." Reed Elsevier reported a 2 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £823 million in 1997. The group took a £66 million hit on

exchange rates, and profit before tax was up 10 per cent at constant exchange rates. There was an exceptional provision of £480 million, previously disclosed, at the troubled Reed Travel Group because of "irregularities" in circulation claims. Reed Elsevier said improved risk management and audit procedures had been introduced. Reed estimates that the cost of the aborted Kluwers merger will be about £10 million. The total dividend payable to shareholders by Reed International, the company's UK arm, is lifted to 14.6p a share from 13.6p, with a second interim of 10.2p. The shares fell 6.5p to 610.5p.

## Weill tops Wall Street pay league with \$227m

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

THE takeover of Salomon Brothers by the Travelers Group last year has led to one of the biggest paydays in Wall Street history. Sandy Weill, the Travelers chair-

man who masterminded his company's rise from an insignificant insurance business to a global finance house, made \$227.5 million (about £137 million) in 1997. A sum of this size is unheard of on Wall Street and can be rivalled only by Michael Eisner, the Disney chair-

man, who last year made \$565 million. The heads of other Wall Street houses earned between \$5 million and \$30 million. Top traders, who get paid a percentage of their trading gains, made similar amounts. Mr Weill was able to reap such riches by virtue of his share option

scheme. Travelers shares rose 78 per cent last year, fuelled by the Wall Street boom and the \$9 billion acquisition of Salomon Brothers. Mr Weill, 64, received \$220 million from the option scheme on top of his salary of \$1 million and a \$6.5 million bonus. He has been at Travelers

since 1986 and was named "CEO of the Year" by *Financial World*, America's oldest investment magazine. Deryck Maughan, the vice-chairman and former Salomon chairman, who is the son of a County Durham miner and former Treasury mandarin, was paid \$18 million.

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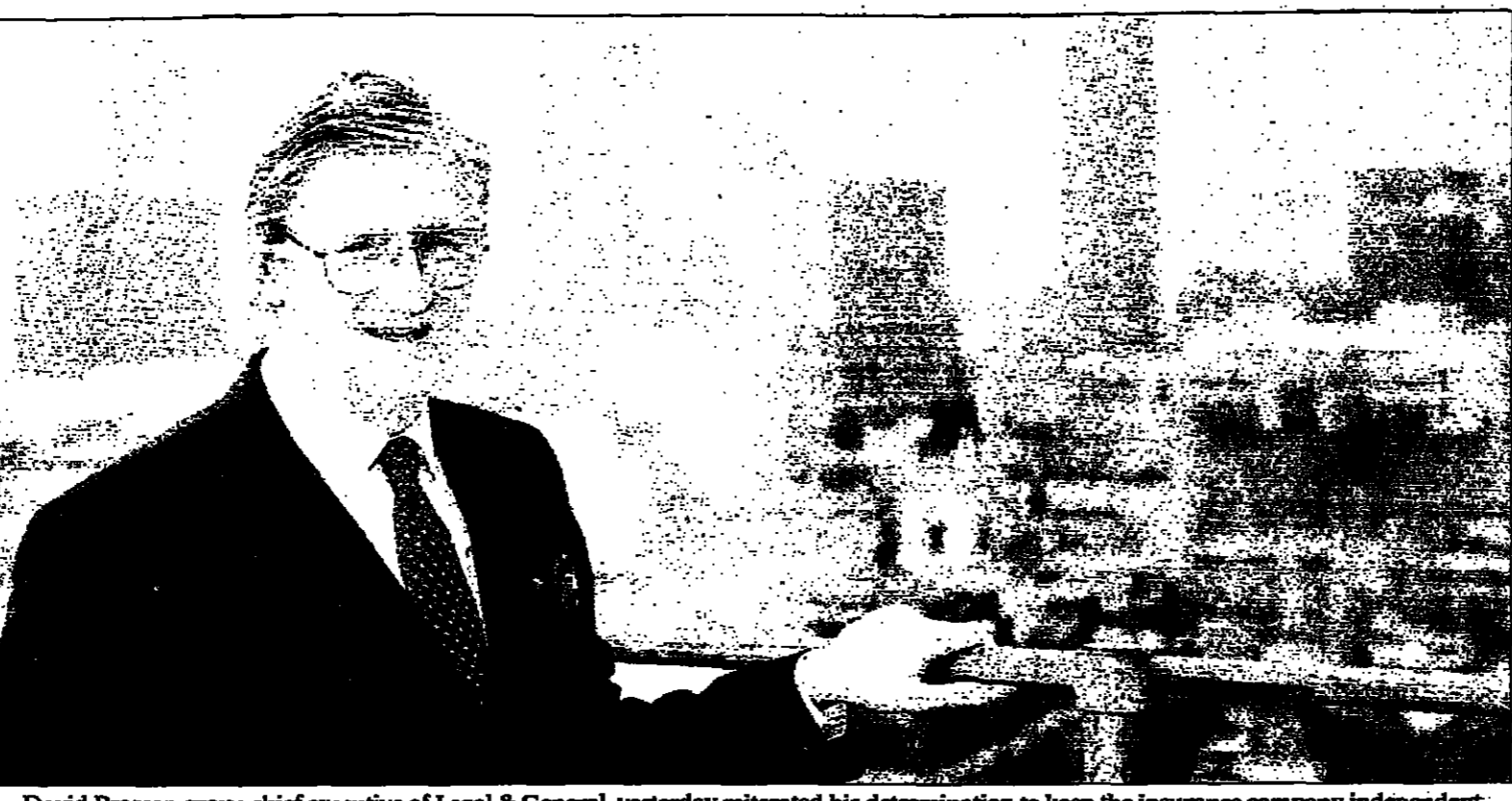
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# L&G beats forecast but shares take a 3.5% dive

By MARIANNE CURPHEY  
INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

SHARES in Legal & General fell more than 3.5 per cent yesterday after David Prosser, group chief executive, reiterated his determination to keep the company independent and in spite of 1997 profits coming in ahead of expectations.

The company, along with fellow insurer Norwich Union, has been the subject of persistent bid rumours. Its share price has risen over the past 12 months from about 400p to 720p last month. The stock fell 23½p yesterday to close at 654p after analysts said that they believed the shares were overvalued and concluded a bid was unlikely in the light of L&G's protestations of independence.



David Prosser, group chief executive of Legal & General, yesterday reiterated his determination to keep the insurance company independent.

# GKN seeks Far East bargains in attempt to maintain growth

By ADAM JONES

GKN, the engineering group whose interests span armoured vehicles, car drive shafts and packing crates, is bargaining in the Far East as it tries to continue the 12 per cent profit growth achieved last year.

CK Chow, chief executive, said yesterday that profits before tax and exceptional items for 1997 were £406 million, up from £363 million. Turnover rose just 1 per cent to £3.8 billion, after defence sales were hit by the completion of the Warrior armoured vehicle contract with Kuwait.

# Reuters sued in copyright claim

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

REUTERS, the on-line media group, is being sued in New York by a Swiss software company for alleged copyright infringement and violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). The writ, filed by All Media Typlan, is likely to be highly embarrassing for Reuters which is already under investigation by a grand jury over claims that a subsidiary illegally acquired proprietary information from Bloomberg, Reuters main competitor.

# Lloyd's gets clearance to collect debts

By JON ASHWORTH

THE Lloyd's insurance market has been cleared to proceed with the collection of more than £100 million in debts from names who refused to participate in the 1996 Lloyd's recovery plan.

# Nasdaq in merger talks with Amex

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

A MERGER of two US stock markets is poised to create a major rival for the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and could attract new European listings to Wall Street.

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# Maunder's agrees to Westbury takeover

JOHN MAUNDERS GROUP, the housebuilder, yesterday agreed to a £531 million takeover bid from Westbury, the rival group. Under the deal, shareholders will receive 2.7 Westbury shares and £14.72 in cash for every ten Maunder's shares, valuing the company at 219p per share. Westbury, which has already acquired about 45.5 per cent of the company from directors and an institutional investor, said the bid was a 32.4 per cent premium to Maunder's closing share price of 165½p on Wednesday. Maunder's shares surged 43p to 208½p yesterday while Westbury shares fell 4½p to 272p. Westbury also announced a 1-for-6 rights issue at 235p per share which will raise £34.7 million.

# Mowlem in buyback

JOHN MOWLEM, the construction group, reported better-than-expected results and said it was ready to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares. The company floated SGB, its scaffolding arm, last year giving an exceptional charge of £37.1 million, which included a non-cash goodwill charge of £37.1 million. Turnover to December 31 was unchanged at £1.4 billion. Before exceptional items, pre-tax profits rose £14.6 million to £31.3 million. Adjusted earnings were up 20 per cent to 10.9p a share. A 2.5p dividend gives a 4p total.

# Hanover hotel for sale

HANOVER INTERNATIONAL, the hotel chain, has put the Imperial Hotel in Cork up for sale for about £4 million. The Imperial - Hanover's first hotel - was demerged from Bridgend Group in 1995, enabling Hanover to gain an immediate stock market listing. Hanover's like-for-like profits before tax for 1997 and exceptional items rose 79 per cent to £1.95 million, with fully diluted earnings per share at 9.7p (10.2p) because of the greater number of shares in issue. A final dividend of 0.5p, payable on June 23, makes a total of 1p (nil).

# Better half for Chelsea

CHELSEA VILLAGE, the AIM-listed company that owns Chelsea Football Club, turned in a first-half profit of £190,000 before tax against a previous loss of £404,000. Earnings in the six months to December 31 were 0.12p a share against losses of 0.27p. The shares fell 1p to 92½p after the group said work on the southern complex was behind schedule and that planning work on the west stand was slow. Sales at the new megastore and the mail-order warehouse were said to be on target.

# Gleeson builds to £5.7m

MJ GLEESON, the construction group, raised pre-tax profits from £3.7 million to £5.7 million in the six months to December 31. The group pointed out that the rise stemmed largely from an £1.6 million exceptional profit on the sale of an investment property, although sales were up from £101 million to £113 million. The interim dividend is lifted to 4.44p from 4.03p. Earnings per share surged from 24.79p to 43.02p. The shares rose 15p to £10.50.

# Syner's maiden profit

SYNER, the recently floated car retailer, reported maiden pre-tax profits of £7.97 million in the year to December 31, in line with the flotation forecast and 338 per cent up on the previous year. Sales rose 59 per cent to £218 million, and basic earnings went up from 3.5p to 28.4p. The group has already said it would not pay a dividend until the first half of this year. Frank Syner, chairman, said: "We will continue to grow by acquisition, but only when we can do this prudently."

# Davis price boosted

SHARES in Davis Service Group rose 20p to 373½p yesterday after the textiles services and plant hire company reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £41 million in 1997 from £31.99 million in 1996. Latest profits were struck after a net exceptional charge of £13.13 million arising from disposals and restructuring costs. Adjusted earnings rose to 21.93p a share from 18.99p. The total dividend is increased to 11.33p a share from 10.29p with a 7.6p final.

# United back in black

UNITED INDUSTRIES, the specialist engineering group, yesterday reported pre-tax profits of £3.64 million for 1997, compared with losses of £446,000 in the previous year when results included provisions against disposals and restructuring. Profits from continuing operations rose 6 per cent to £3.98 million. Adjusted earnings rose to 6.93p a share from 3.46p. The total dividend rises to 2.6p a share from 2.4p, with a final 1.75p.

Table with columns: Bank, Share Price, Bank, Share Price. Lists various international stock markets and their values.

Life, London's futures exchange, this month said that for the first time it would look into electronic trading. The computer-based Frankfurt futures exchange has increasingly been stealing Life's business.

# Mafia grows as a business threat

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

ORGANISED crime is a growing threat to multinationals, with Russia emerging as the most dangerous place in the world to do business, a report reveals today.

**The UK Index-tracking PEP Highest**

The All-Share Tracking PEP that's charged the least, has performed the best.

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Legal & General



STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK
Stock Market Writer
of the Year

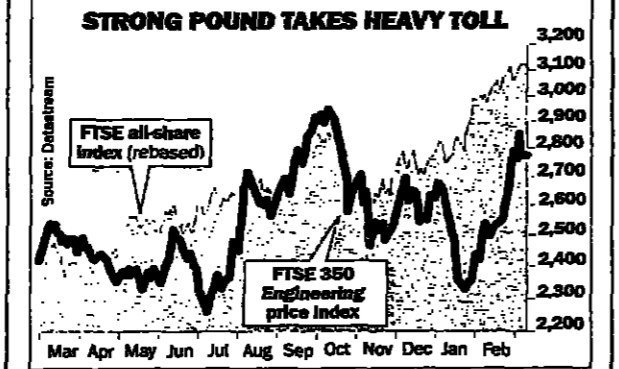
Investor caution justified
as Wall St falls hit home

OPENING falls on Wall Street and the continued strength of the pound had share prices in London beating a retreat. Hopes that the equity market could extend this week's record-breaking run were quickly dented as investors pondered the setback for shares overnight in the Far East and began to brace themselves for an early setback for the Dow Jones industrial average. Their caution proved justified although the sell-off in New York never looked like turning into a rout. In the event, the FTSE 100 index closed just above its low of the day with a fall of 35.0 at 5,794.8.



Nigel Stapleton, left, and Mark Armour, finance director, saw Reed shares dip despite profit at the top end of forecasts

Hoare Govett, the broker. News International, owner of The Times, retreated 11p to 436p after selling overnight in the US spilled over into London. Reed Elsevier fell 6p to 610p despite reporting profits upwards the top end of estimates. Profits at Reed, where Nigel Stapleton is co-chairman, were distorted by exceptional charges totalling £401 million. News of fresh legal action saw Reuters tumble 26p to 636p. This time a Swiss software company, All-Media-Typalm, has issued a writ in the US accusing Reuters of copyright infringement and racketeering. Reuters denies the claim.



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the next six months. The second half of 1998 may prove better once interest rates have peaked. The biggest exporters and those most likely to be affected by currency factors, include British Steel, down 3p to 144p, Johnson Matthey, up 1p to 540p, Vickers, 2p off at 209p, Powerscreen, unchanged at 216p, Weir Group up 1p to 291p, David Brown, down 3p to 209p, and Molins, 2p weaker at 285p after its profits warning. McKechnie, 2p better at 483p, is rated a "buy".

MAJOR INDICES

Table listing major stock indices: New York (Dow Jones, S&P Composite), Tokyo (Nikkei Average), Hong Kong (Hang Seng), Amsterdam (General), Sydney (All Ordinaries), Frankfurt (DAX), Singapore (Straits), Brussels (General), Paris (CAC-40), Zurich (SIX Gen), London (FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE 1000, FTSE Europe 100, FTSE All-Share, FTSE Non Financials, FTSE Fixed Interest, FTSE Govt Secs, Barclays, S&P 500, USDAQ, German Mark, DAX, LSE-TR, XPI, RPIX).

Umbrella lowered

THE colourful Legal & General umbrella has been raised to high in the City. The insurer's full-year results were 8 per cent better than analysts' forecasts, sales of the group's pensions products to individuals rose by 40 per cent and yet the stock was one of the FTSE's biggest fallers yesterday. Shareholders have enjoyed a return of 252 per cent over the past three years and the group's market capitalisation has grown from £2.1 billion to £6.7 billion. But the City has now concluded that L&G's shares have risen far enough. Good sales figures and L&G's confident predictions of future growth prompted analysts to raise their 1998 forecasts yesterday, but not their hopes for the shares. L&G is widely regarded as a well run company. David Prosser has succeeded in swilling external investment management

business by 26 per cent to £21 million; UK Life and pensions profit has risen 11.5 per cent to £21 million while profit from general insurance has risen by almost £6 million to £5.7 million. However, he is also determined to maintain the independence of the company he has run for almost seven years. Remove the takeover premium, and the shares look expensive. A move towards high volumes and low margins, initially lost L&G business but appears now to have paid off. However, L&G sells 50 per cent of its products through independent financial advisers and Mr Prosser argues that a merger with a bank would create a conflict of interest with the bank's own sales staff. With analysts quoting fair value of 440p, the stock could see further falls before it finds equilibrium.



COMMODITIES

Table for COMMODITIES including COCOA (Mar, May, Sep, Dec), ROBUSTA COFFEE (Mar, May, Sep, Dec), WHITE SUGAR (Mar, May, Sep, Dec), MEAT & LIVESTOCK (CATTLE, SHEEP, PIGS).

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURE

Table for LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURE listing various contracts like Long Gilt, German Govt Bond, Japanese Govt Bond, etc.

COMMODITIES

Table for COMMODITIES including ICS-LOR (London \$/tonne), GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES, RUBBER (RSS 1), etc.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS

Table for EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS showing rates for various currencies and terms.

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Table for STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES showing MFR Rates for March 12, Close, 1 month, 3 months.

PRECIOUS METALS

Table for PRECIOUS METALS showing Bullion: Open, Close, High, Low, PGM: Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium.

STOCK MARKET

Large table for STOCK MARKET listing various companies and their share prices, including Anglo-Dutch, Anglo-Irish, Anglo-American, Anglo-Asian, Anglo-African, Anglo-Caribbean, Anglo-Pacific, Anglo-South American, Anglo-European, Anglo-Global.

Large advertisement for 'Tiger's Flight' featuring a tiger and promotional text.

lowered



ANATOLE I. IELTSKY

# Tigers prompt hawks to take flight like farmyard fowl

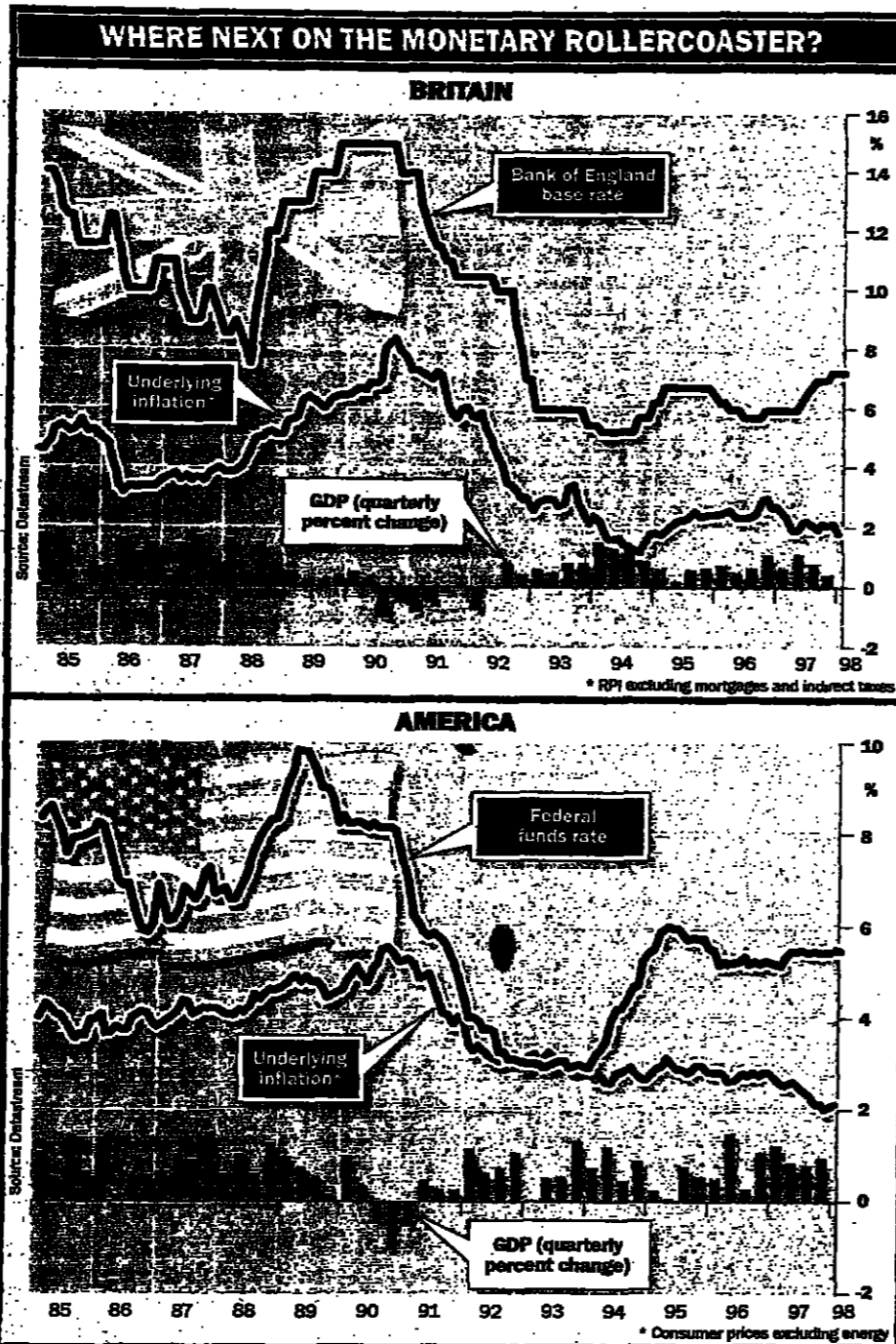
Stricken Asian economies spur change in hardliners' approach to inflation

When it comes to decisions on interest rates, central bankers have traditionally been divided into two groups: the hawks and the doves. But in the past few weeks these species seem to have undergone a strange mutation. By some miracle of avian evolution, the hawks have lightened their plumage and straightened their beaks. As a result they now bear a striking resemblance not so much to doves as to chickens.

It is not just Eddie George at the Bank of England who, scurrying around the farmyard, flapping his wings and clucking in terror when anyone mentions higher rates. Similar scenes are enacted at the US Federal Reserve Board, the Bank of Japan, the Swiss National Bank and even the German Bundesbank. Indeed the biggest monetary surprise in recent weeks was not the split on the Monetary Policy Committee between Mr George and the Bank of England's still-hawkish director of economics, Mervyn King. Even more bewildering were the declarations by Ernst Welteke and Klaus-Dieter Kuebcher, two traditionally conservative directors of the Bundesbank, that Germany's interest rates should be cut from their paltry level of 3.5 per cent.

These comments contradicted the almost unanimous expectation in financial markets that German interest rates would rise to 4 per cent this year as Germany was merged with such traditionally inflationary economies as Italy and Spain. More curiously still, the calls for lower interest rates have come at a time when German growth is clearly accelerating and when unemployment is finally beginning to improve.

What then is going on? Perhaps central bankers around the world are copying America's Alan Greenspan, and learning to love rapid economic growth. Perhaps they are finally prepared to acknowledge that inflation is dead and that the world economy has entered a "new paradigm" (more accurately, the old Keynesian paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s which showed it was possible to combine full employment with low inflation). Perhaps they have accepted that controlling inflation is not the real objective of monetary policy; that the real target should be to achieve the fastest possible economic growth and the lowest possible unemployment consistent with low inflation. Perhaps they have even understood that to maximise growth



and to minimise unemployment they must conduct a Greenspan-style economic experiment which will inevitably mean taking some risks with inflation. If this were true, I would be delighted, even if it made my past diatribes about independent central banks look silly. But from what I know of central bankers, I suspect that such optimism will prove misplaced. The surprisingly expansionary policies that they are suddenly pursuing do not reflect a Damascene conversion from the old idol of price stability to the new ones of economic growth and full employment. Rather than faith, hope or charity, the central bankers' generous behaviour is probably motivated by a less benign cause: fear. Central bankers around the world seem to have been scared witless by the crisis in Asia.

Why, then do the central bankers attack such importance to Asia? In my experience, central bankers and finance ministers are always more moved by financial crises that threaten the stability of stock markets and banking systems than they are by

broader economic calamities that bankrupt ordinary businesses and make millions of people unemployed. But the crises that really excite central bankers are the ones that seem to threaten global financial stability. These call for international co-ordination, bringing together the whole mutual admiration society of central bankers and IMF officials from around the world. The more I think about it, the more today's events remind me of a similar episode exactly ten years ago: the period after the 1987 stock market crash, when central bankers who had blithely ignored a decade of mass unemployment, suddenly decided that a 30 per cent correction on Wall Street was the greatest threat to world civilisation that they had ever seen. Convinced that the stock market crash would be followed by a collapse in world economic activity, they all eased monetary policy together and this invalidated the assumption that they had all made about a slowdown in world growth. The result in America and most other countries was a moderate upsurge in inflation, ag-

gravated in Europe by German reunification, followed in 1990 by a modest recession, aggravated by the panic in energy markets triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Britain, however, suffered much more serious consequences after Black Monday. Nigel Lawson, who prided himself on being the most anti-inflationary Chancellor in British history, showed all the zeal of the recent convert when it came to "co-ordinated" easing after the Wall Street crash.

Long after wiser economic managers such as Mr Greenspan at the Fed had reversed course, realising that there was no threat of global recession, he went on furiously cutting interest rates. The result was Britain's most extreme boom-bust cycle in 50 years. The question now is whether some such experience is about to be repeated, perhaps with that former, playing the Lawson role of the overzealous convert.

Looking at the international environment, there are striking parallels with 1988. The

# British lead can help Europe's jobless in quest for employment

When Robert Carlyle slips off his jacket in *The Full Monty*, he's bringing to life the full concept of employability. For most people, it won't mean stripping for a living — but instead it will be their passport to the future. It is likely that most people won't have one job for life — but several. That means learning new skills to survive, ensuring that if you lose your job you are more likely to be able to get another.



People need to be enabled to embrace adaptability, says David Blunkett

Today ministers covering education as well as jobs and social affairs. In my department we have broken down the old barriers between education and employment. Our recent Green Paper on lifelong learning is only the latest example of how employability runs through all my department's policies. But we have to see that broader approach adopted across Europe if we are to help people to adapt to these new realities. We need to marry that with greater flexibility and adaptability in the labour market.

This means individuals taking their responsibilities seriously as well as Government and employers — which is where both individual learning accounts and the University for Industry will make a difference. Ministers in our Government accept the need for this new approach. But we need to ensure that ministers in all governments across the EU appreciate its relevance too. Some, like my opposite numbers in France, Martin Aubrey and Claude Allegre, are already developing this approach in tackling social exclusion and offering help to people affected by change. But just as our record in jobs is better than in many European countries, we want to give Europe a new lead on adaptability and employability.

Lifelong learning and employability offer real opportunities for business and individuals to adjust to change, to develop new skills and carry out new work, providing a third way between job-destroying over-regulation and the threat of the removal of legitimate social protection. The author is Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

# Big pay night

A VERY nasty spat has blown up over the pay package of Michael Grade now that he has returned to the family firm of First Leisure. Funny how times change: Grade used to be vilified as "Britain's pornographer-in-chief", when he ran Channel 4. Meanwhile all those wall-to-wall lesbian nights ensured his popularity among the chattering classes. Now he is on course to earn more than £4.5 million over the next four years — and is attacked as one of Britain's premier fat cats, and he is not going to get that knight hood he covets either. Sometimes

you can't win. So First Leisure's annual meeting should be a lively affair, given the shares' dismal performance. The normal response is to hold the meeting as far from civilisation as possible, and hope no one turns up. Trouble is, First Leisure's bowling clubs and bingo halls are fairly accessible. So the company has instead gone for noon on Budget Day, next Tuesday, which ensures most serious investors are unable to attend and cause trouble. "It's been set in stone for yonks," a source claims.



"Fat cat" scorn heaped on Michael Grade's head.

THE advertising campaign to be launched by Howard Davies at the Financial Services Authority to identify victims of pensions misselling will have an unusual theme. An ostrich, as in people sticking their heads in the sand and not facing up to their responsibilities. (Yes I know they don't). But ostriches? Not a great symbol for sensible investment. Protect your pension — put it into ostrich farms.

Pass the pills A HEART-STOPPING moment in a Sydney hotel room



late last year for Ian Gowrie-Smith, the Australian chairman of SkyPharma, an impetuous drug delivery company, and founder of Medeva. SkyPharma was fast running out of money: hopes were pinned on an improved version of Paxil, a \$1.5 billion anti-depressant that competes with Prozac. Gowrie-Smith receives a message that a colleague had called to say: "This product has been failed today." Company bust, money down the drain. He spends two frantic hours trying to contact Michael Ashton in Switzerland. To learn that the receptionist had misheard. Ashton actually said: "The product has been failed today." Try it with an Australian accent.

# Effective

I FOR one am getting seriously hacked off with companies that still blame the "Diana effect" for poor results, almost six months after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. One estate agent was trying to persuade us yesterday that the housing market, rather than taking a breather from earlier gains, had slowed down because people had decided not to move house — as a mark of respect? Still prostrate with grief?

A colleague has a suggestion. Any company that plays the Diana card in a trading statement should be forced to make a donation to the Memorial Fund — shall we say £10,000? Not enough to dent profits, but enough to discourage over-use of the excuse. WHAT fun, the arrival of Which? Tax Saving Guide 1998, the consumer magazine's annual tip-toe through the Inland Revenue's labyrinthine rules. Except that this year, the actuaries tell me, there is an awful and potentially expensive error in the section on capital gains tax. I would not normally point out the mistake, if Which? were not quite so pious and high-minded when anyone else slips up.

# Net gains

DAVID PROSSER of Legal & General has found a novel way of ensuring he becomes cyber-literate. Rather than simply calling for an office machine, he has bought a £4,000 computer. "I spent my own money as an incentive to use it," he says. His first task was ordering flowers for Mother's Day, so we will have to wait to discover if he is really computer-literate. Prosser is clearly a genuine convert. He has set up special Internet Café sites at Legal & General where staff are encouraged to surf the net.

MARTIN WALLER



"Miss Jones, send in the man from the Pru..."

# BUSINESS LETTER

## Bringing in Egon Ronay is not just a marketing ploy

From Egon Ronay Sir, Your Tempus column (March 11) rightly remarks about Wetherspoons' interim report that, because of competition, the group "had to act on its food operation". "Bringing in Egon Ronay" is apostrophised as a "review of its menus (which) is, if nothing else, a good marketing ploy". But it's a very great deal more than that. Though undisclosed until the interim

report, my team of six restaurant inspectors, including me personally, has been visiting every one of 60 predestined Wetherspoons pubs for eight months, at least once a fortnight — an operation to expand to all the group's pubs in time. Two-page, daily reports detailed our recommendations for the further improvement of quality of every every food item served. I am pleased that the staff and management's co-opera-

tion produced excellent results so now I am happy to allow my name, guaranteeing quality, to be displayed on a gradually increasing number Wetherspoons pubs, whose food operation is now most competitive. Yours faithfully, EGON RONAY, Egon Ronay Associates Limited, Walton Street, London SW2 2HT.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST PRICES

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized into columns with headers for fund names, share prices, and other financial metrics.

INVEST IN A 7 DAY GOLF HOLIDAY... 4 STAR HOTEL VILAMOURA, ALGARVE... from just £484 per person... LONGSHOT GOLF HOLIDAYS... 01730 230370

Source: FT Information... The information is for CAR (Compound Annual Return)...



هكمان النحل

Equities lose ground

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, ENGINEERING VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, LEISURE & HOTELS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS, GENERAL, RETAILERS, FOOD, SUPPORT SERVICES, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, DISTRIBUTORS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, ENGINEERING, ENGINEERING VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HEALTHCARE, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, LEISURE & HOTELS, MEDIA, MINING, OIL & GAS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, RETAILERS, GENERAL, RETAILERS, FOOD, SUPPORT SERVICES, TRANSPORT, WATER.

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Advertisement for Seven Seas Motor Oil. Text: 'Take an investment in your future. SEVEN SEAS MOTOR OIL. The Best God Lubes Oil. 100% COPOLYMER. 100% SYNTHETIC.' Includes an image of a Seven Seas Motor Oil can.

Table titled 'BRITISH FUNDS' showing various fund names, their performance metrics, and other details.

Table titled 'INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of' showing various index-linked investment options and their details.

Source: FT information. All figures are in pence unless otherwise stated. \* Excludes 5 pence discount. † Figures are based on the 100 pence share.



More than 2,000 hours of my life have been spent at orchestral concerts. That has been a hefty investment of time, if not of money — for I am lucky enough to be paid to write about concerts that I would rush to hear anyway. I count that as one of the great privileges of my job.

So I write these words with a sadness akin to that of the football fan who sees his team slipping inexorably towards relegation. Our orchestras are in a hole and there is no easy escape route. Our concert life is more depressed than I can recall in 20 years of reporting it. This is "National Orchestra Week", supposedly a celebration. But it is entirely symbolic of current realities that it should coincide with the news that the Arts Council has pulled the plug on the South Bank Centre redevelopment — a decision which, though inevitable given that the sums don't add up, is perhaps the last nail in the coffin that passes for London's orchestral life.

I had no great love of Richard Rogers's plan for a wavy glass canopy to cover the Festival Hall's

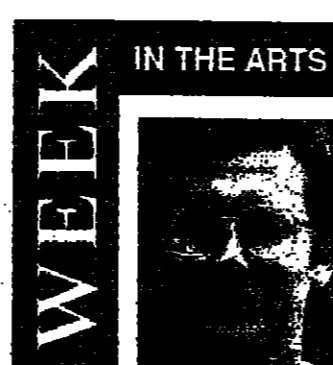
# Why orchestras face a dying cadence

satellite venues. After all, £135 million is a hell of a price tag for a roof, even by the fantastical standards of the London building trade. But the fact is that the grubby, sinister concrete walkways surrounding what is supposedly Britain's premier concert hall are a real turn-off to potential concertgoers. And the failure to deal with that, after a Wagnerian-length planning saga stretching back ten years, is symptomatic of a fatal malaise in our musical world.

There is no buzz around our orchestras at present. They play concerts, but the concerts are not occasions. They all seem to merge into one; there is no excitement to lure music lovers away from their CDs or Classic FM. Some of them feel like funerals, so muted is the atmosphere. Even the LSO, hitherto the pampered aristocrat of the orchestral world, has attracted criticism this season for tired programming: blockbuster com-

poser series relying on conductors — Davis, Rostropovich — who have done it all before. In Manchester the Hall is now a byword for financial turmoil. Two London orchestras are in perilous straits. You don't have to be Mystic Meg to sense that catastrophe for the whole art form is just a drumbeat away.

It is convenient to blame poor management, inadequate subsidy or supine Arts Council non-strategies for this state of affairs, and all have undoubtedly played their shabby part. The astonishing fact that London has no fewer than eight competing symphony and opera orchestras, all subsidised by our taxes or the BBC licence-fee, speaks volumes for the strategic impotence of arts bureaucrats. So does the extraordinary statistic that no fewer than 19 Arts Council reports on "orchestral provision" have been written in the past 30 years. Not one of them has had



RICHARD MORRISON

the slightest impact on real life. But there are deeper problems. First, television — the most powerful medium of our day — has almost entirely eliminated orchestras from its schedules, save for a few Proms each summer. Secondly, Britain is now governed by a

generation of politicians, national and local, with no affection for orchestras. They don't go to concerts themselves, and they begrudge subsidising those who do. To make matters worse, the great generation of Jewish immigrants who did so much to establish and sustain top-quality musical life in Britain is now dying out. In short, the orchestras are desperately short of cultured, wealthy, influential friends, and the short-sighted cuts in music education will do nothing to nurture the patrons of the future.

The orchestras can do little to combat that: they are fighting social trends larger than themselves. But they could make themselves more attractive, especially to the young. They must accept that at a time when taste in entertainment (like it or loathe it) is largely defined by \$200 million special-effects movies, glimmering Disney musicals and stadium-rock con-

certs with mind-blowing lighting plots, an audience can no longer be expected to gaze enraptured for two hours at a conductor's backside and a platform of glum men in penguin suits.

Orchestras have fought shy of spicing up their act, for fear of alienating the purists. But quite honestly, at this last-ditch stage in the game, what is there to lose? Why not strike wild alliances with the rock world? Why not get a rap poet to introduce a Beethoven symphony? Anything to break down the popular notion that an orchestra is a stuffy relic kept alive solely to comfort pensioners in their declining years.

The trouble is, what strikes some in the classical music world as an "outrageous gimmick" would barely register in the wider showbiz world as a perceptible change. We are talking here about people — and, I regret to say, some

music critics are prominent among them — who shudder even at the mildly rock-band ambience of a Michael Nyman or Philip Glass concert. But the harsh truth is that unless orchestras change they will die. Nor is this some doomsday scenario for the mid-21st century. It's a possibility within ten years.

That would be a tragedy. The music is too good not to share with the next generation. If one thing gets in the way is the outdated paraphernalia of the classical concert, let's sweep the paraphernalia away. And I write this as one who has genuinely enjoyed his 2,000 hours of old-fashioned, prim, ordered concert-attending. If that sort of event was still packing 'em in, I would fight to the last crocheted for it. But it isn't. I don't want to be the last person left to swish off the lights in the Festival Hall. I want my children to enjoy the orchestral masterpieces that have enriched my life. As things stand, wild horses wouldn't drag them to a symphony concert. That's sad for me, sadder for them, and saddest of all for the orchestras.

# My family and other animals

On the first page of the programme is Larkin's famous poem about the way your Mum and Dad, well, let's just say mess you up. Then comes real-life testimony from a wife called Janet, who one night saw her own ghost, and her husband Bill, who spent part of a chaotic boyhood in a children's home. A bit later we get Ambrose Bierce's definition of the family as a body of individuals comprising male, female, dog, cockroaches, bedbugs and fleas: "the unit of modern civilised society". By the time you settle into your seat, you are pretty sure that Northern Stage's contribution to the Donmar's *Four Corners* season will not be a celebration of hearth and home.

So why not just buy the programme and leave? As I took my battering from Northern Stage's imaginative cast, that sometimes seemed a good idea. But whatever you say about Matthew Dunster's play — that it is crude, obvious, whatever — at least it is not timid or bland.

There is little onstage but a battered black sofa facing a

## THEATRE

television. Then Gillian Wright's Mum suggests to David Whitaker's Dad that she should put to bed Ben Joiner's Liam, a human vegetable who does nothing except jerk and twitch: whereupon Dad grabs her by the hair, throws her to the floor and urinates on her. You certainly have to concede that the piece starts as it means to go on.

Rain splatters against the tiny barred window and pours through the ceiling. Dad and his other son, Ben Crompton's Nial, curse each other. Mum swallows pills. Thunder rumbles. Dad hugs Mum, tells her filthy sexist jokes, then abuses her while she stitches the gaping knife-wound just below his eye.

Throughout, Nial roams the stage quoting the Bible, mainly *Revelation*, and slapping himself. He thinks he is receiving messages from satellite dishes through his teeth, and this is something he wishes to

share with others, notably Bob Geldof. Sadly, we never learn how the Irish knight reacts to being told over the phone that God will wipe the tears from our eyes.

Is life really as erratic as this in Newcastle, or wherever the piece is set? There is no answer to that, because Dunster does not explain or analyse. He simply shows, and keeps on showing, in the cartoonish manner of the attacks on the family and other Establishment targets that were common in 1960s American drama. To that genre *Tell Me* brings extra brutality, little more.

Richard Gregory's cast, led by Crompton's babbling Nial, exudes disciplined energy, and Wright's Mum, drifting bantamly about with a glazed grin, adds finesse. But the result of their efforts was, paradoxically, to make me feel sorry for the family. Thirty years ago maybe you could argue that it oppressed souls. But if the statistics are right, the poor old institution is half-dead — and what's the merit in booting something that's down?

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Nuclear unit ready to explode: Gillian Wright, David Whitaker, Ben Joiner and Ben Crompton are not your average Mum, Dad and the kids

# The iron hand in the velvet frock

Although the programme does not draw attention to the ever-marching footsteps of time, 21 years have gone by since the gay comedy troupe *Bloolips* was founded by Bette Bourne. Close inspection might reveal that he has aged in this time, but for as long as I remember he has cultivated the Petra look of somebody monumental and half as old as time.

Like almost all revues in the history of the genre, the *Bloolips* repertoire has always been a combination of the hilarious and the not-quite-there-yet. The canny suggestion that their numbers are at the same time under-rehearsed and over-performed joins with an absurd weariness and abrupt bursts of agility, an engaging approach provided not too many items

go off at half-cock. For their present show, Bourne and his partner Precious Pearl (aka Paul Shaw) pick'n'mix the cream of the past few years. And while there are, so to speak, pearls missing, the show serves as a happy reminder to old customers and a tasty introduction to newcomers.

Along with Nicolas Bloomfield (at the pianoforte) Bourne and Pearl play in severe whiteface relieved with fetching dabs of red, and wear a succession of pretty frocks. Their performance characters are consistent enough to be called an act, although the term does an injustice to their capacity to undermine assumptions. Bourne is the raffine one who has seen it all, but might just trust himself once more to someone young

and muscular. Pearl is perter, constantly disappointed, but not yet disillusioned, with the air of one who has not entirely lost hope of finding a satisfactory protector.

Imagine then, if you dare, in the Ancient Rome sketch where Bourne wears a rose-pink toga as the Emperor Hadrian and Pearl skips pettishly in and out sporting a little chiton decorated with

cornflowers. Immediately afterwards Bourne is Celia Johnson on the famous station platform, but inconvenienced this time by a bogey up her nose. In both sketches the tone is camp, of course, with that style's self-aware and mocking angle on the Universe, but their performances are grounded in the skills of acting, and their precision, vocal command and judgment of effect give an iron-hard strength to what they delicately do.

## CONCERT

display his secure sense of style and vocal agility in an extraordinary gloss on the *Nunc dimittis* which Bach marked very unusually "Innozenze". The soprano Maris Petersen seemed less at home with Bach's idiom, though there were some lovely moments in her aria in cantata No. 64 (*Sohet, welch eine Liebe*). Here she was helped by Koopman reducing the orchestra down to a string quartet: problems of balance were instantly resolved. Given all the current academic arguments over single-string Bach, this solution, born no doubt of a pragmatic response to a lightening voice, was very telling.

The best moments in the concert came when Koopman's natural performing art-jour combined with Bach at his most fervent, as in the opening chorus of No. 64, or the tenor aria in No. 81 (*Jesus Schatz, was soll ich hoffen?*) in which the instrumental writing so effectively evokes the foaming billows of the rivers of Belial. However, for all the marvellous diversity and inventiveness of the music and the excellent playing and singing of the ABO and its Choir, I don't think even Bach would have expected his audience to listen to five cantatas one after the other.

TESS KNIGHTON

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The scale of their ambition no longer chimes with the group's reduced circumstances, let alone the new pop landscape: take that, fallen superstar Jim Kerr (far right) and the rest of Simple Minds

# A legend in their own minds

**SIMPLE MINDS**  
*Néapolis* (Chrysalis 49371200 £14.99)  
"IF THERE is such a thing as a big league, we want to be in it," singer Jim Kerr once declared. And, although younger readers may find it difficult to believe, back in the summer of 1991 there was not a bigger band than Simple Minds anywhere in Europe. Nowadays, they belong to a middle order of middle-aged groups whose credibility and popularity were savagely undermined by Britpop. But musically, Simple Minds will always see themselves as part of the "big league", and indeed are quite incapable of operating on any other premise. So, despite all the talk of *Néapolis* marking a retreat from the Americanised stadium rock of their last album and a move towards the more European electronica-rock of earlier collections, the shift of emphasis is very much confined to the margins. As far as

the grandiloquent themes and inflated production style of numbers such as *War Babies*, *Superman v Supersoul* and *If I Had Wings* are concerned, it's very much business as usual. The problem is that the scale of Simple Minds' ambition no longer chimes with the group's reduced circumstances, let alone the new pop landscape. When they come up with a decent tune, such as *Glitterball*, which is by far the album's best track, you can forgive them their lingering pomp-rock foibles. But when Kerr is simply crooning a sequence of self-important slogans — as on *Lightning or Tears of a Guy* ("So many rivers run through me") — in his silky, stylised drawl, it soon starts to sound like idle bluster. The epic approach is all very well when you are bestriding the stadiums of Europe. But once the listener's suspension of disbelief falters, the "biggest things can often sound the most hollow."

**SPACE**  
*Tin Planet* (Gut GUTCD5 £13.99)  
HUMOUR is notoriously difficult to get right in pop songs, not least because even the wittiest of lyrics will start to grate after a few repetitions. In the case of *Space*, however, when the jokes are not remotely amusing in the first place, the music to which they have been appended very quickly becomes unlistenable. *The Ballad Of Tom Jones*, with its droopy punchline "I've never thrown my knickers at

you?" And I don't come from Wales", is about as witty as *Tin Planet* gets. Elsewhere a wearying combination of easy-listening string arrangements, cheesy vaudeville interludes and instrumental dance-track filler contribute to an album that ought to rise like a soufflé, but ultimately falls as flat as a pancake. Take away the mock-serious undercurrents and the knowingly arch vocal delivery and *Space* could be the Fred-

die and the Dreamers of the 1990s.  
**PHILADELPHIA BLUNTZ**  
*Philadelphia Bluntz* (Autonomy 7243 8 23429 £13.49)  
THE name refers to a brand of cigars which are renowned among the stoner community for lending themselves to certain illicit modifications. But as far as the geography goes, the electronica duo of Rennie Filgrem and William South, better known as Philadelphia Bluntz, is London-based, pure and simple. Filgrem's experience as a breakbeat club DJ and South's background in jazz provide the musical foundations of their self-titled second album, a frisky combination of big beat

rhythms, spiky jazzy dynamics and street-smart drum and bass hustle. There are echoes of Finnish star Jimi Tenor on the loungecore organ groove of *Blue*, while *Godzilla* and *Game Over* recall the big-screen dramatics of Adam F and Propellerheads. Melodically alert and rhythmically superb, the Bluntz are (probably quite literally) smoking.

ba have kept their musical options commendably open, while still maintaining a faint but persistent aura of mystery. Couched in instrumental textures that range from scratching to strings, and steered by the cool, beguiling voice of Sylee Edwards — she was the blonde black woman slotted between Bono and David Bowie on the *Perfect Day* video — the album encompasses pop, reggae, soul, jazz and orchestral influences, carefully parcelled up into an intelligent and seductive whole. With so many distinct and varied moods on offer — from the soothing calm of *The Sea* ("The sun is shining, the water is clear") to the looming menace of *Friction* ("Friction is turning to fire") — this is a wonderfully poised yet vibrant album which travels far beyond the monochrome angst of trip hop.

**TOP TEN ALBUMS**

1	(1)	Ray of Light	Madonna (Maverick)
2	(2)	Thanic Soundtrack	James Horner (Sony Classical)
3	(3)	Let's Talk About Love	Celine Dion (Epic)
4	(4)	Like Thru a Lens	Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
5	(5)	Urban Hymns	Verve (Epic)
6	(6)	Maverick a Strike	Finley Quayle (Epic)
7	(7)	Tin Planet	Space (Gut)
8	(12)	Left of the Middle	Natalie Imbruglia (RCA)
9	(8)	All Saints	All Saints (London)
10	(5)	Melting Pot	Charistans (Beggars Banquet)

**MORCHEEBA**  
*Big Calm* (Indochina ZENO7 £14.99)  
HAVING drifted into view in 1996 as one of several acts travelling on the post-Portishead trip hop ticket, Morcheeba have quietly built up an impressive head of steam and now look set to make a serious impression with their second album, *Big Calm*. Unlike Portishead, who have since allowed the trip hop formula to turn into an artistic straitjacket, Morchee-

ba have kept their musical options commendably open, while still maintaining a faint but persistent aura of mystery. Couched in instrumental textures that range from scratching to strings, and steered by the cool, beguiling voice of Sylee Edwards — she was the blonde black woman slotted between Bono and David Bowie on the *Perfect Day* video — the album encompasses pop, reggae, soul, jazz and orchestral influences, carefully parcelled up into an intelligent and seductive whole. With so many distinct and varied moods on offer — from the soothing calm of *The Sea* ("The sun is shining, the water is clear") to the looming menace of *Friction* ("Friction is turning to fire") — this is a wonderfully poised yet vibrant album which travels far beyond the monochrome angst of trip hop.

We can become famous for many things, but we go down in history for one

There's a Pulp song called *Countdown*, which was released in the days when looking like Jarvis Cocker was something only Jarvis Cocker did, and the rest of the world still thought fractal nylon shirts and huge clumpy glasses made of scaffolding were something you wore if your parents were too poor, too blind or too cruel to get you proper clothes. *Countdown*'s basic premise was that we're all on a countdown to our hour of fame; the moment, be it manky or spanky, for which we are either sighed or giggled over in years to come. Perhaps Dennis Leary heard the 12in. At any rate, in one of his routines he recounted the life of a virtuous man who invented a new kind of vital circuit-board, and went on to devote his life to charity, before being killed by a poodle that fell from the fortieth floor of a tenement block. And from that moment, the rest of his life was forgotten — he was the Poodle Guy.

## Only one poodle per customer

presses the button on the Camera of History, and a glorious and ego-satisfying Polaroid of Stars is pasted into the Scrapbook Of Things. But all too often, a huge poodle falls unexpectedly from the sky, and Five Star find themselves being remembered solely for being asked: "Why are you so crap?" on a phone-in. One of the reasons pop stars get so irritable and flouncy when asked about their *Countdown* Moments — and Poodle Incidents (try asking Bob Geldof about Live Aid, or Marianne Faithfull about Mars bars) is that they reveal the depressing truth that we all lead lives that are, basically, one-hit wonders; and that

say, ten minutes — leads to the discovery of several phenomena. The False Poodle, for instance: where one freakish incident is snugly presumed to be The Incident by cultural commentators, before a second incident supersedes the first. Many believed Cocker's Poodle to be the tabloid headline "Ban This Sick Stunt", wherein *The Star* accused Pulp of corrupting Little Kid-dies with artwork depicting a wrap of speed. Cor! How wrong we were all proved six months later, when Cocker stormed the stage at the Brits and slapped his backside at Michael Jackson. The False Poodle's close relative, the Reverse False Poodle, has only ever been found in conjunction with Oasis: where a band Poodle early on in their career, but have other, erroneous Poodles foisted on them by the press. Oasis's Rock History Polaroid was taken at Knebworth in 1996, when Noel bellowed "This is history!" — which was basically a 28-year-old man throwing a Poodle at himself. Since then, a couple of tour-blowing, head-bumping chihuahuas have been expanded into Poodles; but really, when the Poodle drops, the Poodle drops. You can't very well chuck it at yourself a second and third time.



CAITLIN MORAN

### DENI HINES PAY ATTENTION

Album Out Now

Of course, within all this are terrible wells of pain and stinky, rank pockets of outrageous fate. Nick Drake's back catalogue is such a ravishment of heaven that, when the Earth finally falls into the Sun and all we have ever known is gone, each of his songs will have turned into a hard, bright diamond. His life is tragic history — loner, stoner, recluse, dead before he was 30 — and his beauty heartbreaking; but yet he will ever be known as That Guy Who Did That Folky Thing They Played On Top Sixties Drama *Heartbeat* When Nick Berry's Wife Died. But what, one wonders, of the Biggest Female Solo Star In Britain (copyright EMI Records)? What is Louise's *Countdown* Moment? What is the very nub of her existence? What indeed. She is ether, air, a mild dampness, a forlorn waft in the down-wind of posterity. How could one remember her? Not even if a poodle fell 40 storeys on to her head.

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Without controversy, can the world's biggest literary prize be any good? Nicolette Jones reports

The feel-good book contest

The shortlist was announced yesterday for the world's largest fiction prize. There will, however, be no televised dinner when the winner is declared...

This is despite the fact that the IMPAC award, as well as being the most lucrative literary prize (bar the Nobel), which is for a lifetime's work, also embraces the widest field...

Graham Swift, who won the Booker Prize in 1996, now has a one-in-ten chance of a bona fide fifth time Booker's £20,000 Last Orders is on the shortlist...

presentation is not made until a month later, on June 13, when the winner, notified in advance, receives the prize from the President of the Irish Republic...



At the same time IMPAC, a company that "helps organisations around the world to increase their profitability" (not a management consultancy; it does not merely advise, it implements change), was looking for a project to sponsor...

Six of the best from the shortlisted ten: (clockwise from top left) David Dabydeen, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Jamaica Kincaid, André Brink, Earl Lovelace and Herta Müller

LONDON

APOCALYPTICA Second Prolife Rally play in the New Directors season. Seven people tell stories in a bombed building in a war zone...

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media time



Cool Britannia hits zero: Catatonia and other bands criticise Labour's policies on Welfare to Work, tuition fees, curfews and drugs decriminalisation

Blair's rock rebellion

When the New Musical Express made headlines this week with its blitzkrieg on Tony Blair, it was a piece of media management worthy of New Labour itself.

Carol Midgley reports on a timely piece of media management from a veteran bible of pop

who marched on London last week, he apparently failed to notice that Cool Britannia was turning against him.

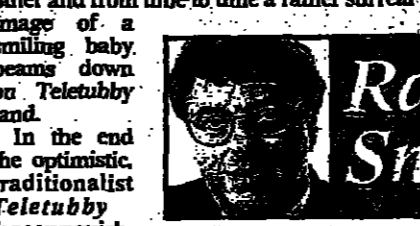
its front page to a picture of Mr Blair with the headline: "Ever had the feeling you've been cheated?" Inside, a survey of some of the leading names in pop, from Jarvis Cocker of Pulp to Cerys Matthews of Catatonia, slated Mr Blair for deceiving the industry he used so effectively, and criticised four areas of government policy: Welfare to Work, university tuition fees, curfews for under-18s and drugs decriminalisation.

industry had been building and he had decided it was time for Mr Blair's "wake-up call". "This resentment was manifesting itself in the interviews we did with bands," he said.

dustries, more important to our economy than steel. "Mr Blair should be reading NME every week, and he might find out something that is going on in this country," Mr Sutherland adds.

Teletubbies beat the Po-faces by a smile

If you go down to the woods today you will find... a lot of excitement about children's television programmes and not a little heat as well.



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programme quotas to deal with problems like that. Then, as if there were not enough troubles in children's programme-land, the producers had to wrestle with the fear of losing their young viewers to the computer screen.

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Mail trinity: Viscount Rothermere, clever, complicated and cunning; Paul Dacre, an editor with only two interests in life; Sir David English: even at 67, he will not easily give up power

# The men who made the Mail

They are a powerful triumvirate — a viscount, a knight and an award-winning editor. The three men at the top at the *Daily Mail* rule it ruthlessly, without qualms about the feelings of those who inhabit what Dr Sally Taylor calls a snakepit. An American broadcaster, journalist and media professor, who has written a study of Britain's tabloids, she believes that you have to be hungry and fearless to stay alive there, let alone succeed.

But that is a description of many a tough newspaper where the pursuit of scoops is pure journalistic hedonism. The second of her biographies of the men who made, and continue to make, the *Daily Mail* one of the world's most popular newspapers, concentrates on the scandal-filled life of the late Esmond Rothermere, whom she dubs "the reluctant press lord". But it is the paper's living history that equally fascinates.

Viscount Northcliffe, who founded the *Daily Mail* in 1896, followed by his brother, Harold, the first Viscount Rothermere who supported Oswald Mosley, were originally in control.

Then handsome, charming Esmond, Rothermere's acknowledged son, took over. Dr Taylor suggests he was really fathered by St John Harmsworth, Rothermere's brother. Esmond wanted to be an actor, but became an MP.

## Gerald Isaaman talks to the woman who has uncovered the genius, the intrigue and the scandal behind a newspaper legend

Only the demands of family duty put him in charge; disastrously so, because he led Associated Newspapers (the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Sketch* and *Evening News*) to the brink of collapse in 1970, when even merger with the *Daily Express*, then dominant, was contemplated.

Enter Esmond's ebullient son, Vere Hazensworth, the present Viscount Rothermere, armed with many of his father's physical attributes, but affected deeply in his youth by the bitter divorce of his parents. The circumstances were "as dramatic as an opera", in that the chances of rescuing the family media empire, and its reputation, were remote. However, those slim chances were to be enhanced by the presence of the daring Editor of the *Daily Sketch*, now Sir David English, who had already taken the difficult personal decision to enter the hotel business should the faltering *Sketch* sink.

Together they forged the policy of sinning the paper's appeal towards women, something which Northcliffe failed to achieve when he owned the

*Daily Mirror*. "We have to direct ourselves to women right through — not to producing a women's paper, but a paper for women," Viscount Rothermere insisted.

And it has taken the *Mail* to its present pinnacle, under the editorship of Paul Dacre, the third man, whose more recent appointment in that post is outside the scope of Dr Taylor's book. But she has significant views on all three.

"It can be savage inside," the *Daily Mail*, says Dr Taylor. She is tall, blonde, elegant and hard-bitten by experience. We sit in the domestic safety of the kitchen of her flat in Hampstead, London. "One wonders about the savagery. It didn't surprise me to find it. Nothing Fleet Street ever does can match the offensive activities of American television broadcasting."

She portrays Viscount Rothermere as a man of "lush good looks" and tells how he learnt to gamble as a teenager in Portugal at Estoril's casino and started work in the paper's postal bargains department. She delights in trying to mimic his way of

talking, especially the long silences in his conversation. She claims that one of his faults is that he can seem lazy. Nevertheless, she says: "It would be hard to get up in the morning and get ahead of Rothermere." And she adds: "He's very clever, complicated and cunning. He doesn't mind looking bland and completely harmless. He loves that. In fact, he loves to be underestimated. I am constantly amazed by the things he does. He's multi-faced."

It was Viscount Rothermere who commissioned her, in 1992, to tell the uncensored, modern history of the *Mail*, giving her complete access to all available papers. As they sat at a table, she showed him the draft of the chapter involving him and he hesitatingly pointed out: "I don't know that this part about me is true."

There was a familiar, long pause before he added: "And I don't know that it's not true, but it's an honest interpretation."

She feared Sir David English would hesitate over revelations about him, the wheeler-dealer of Fleet Street, but apparently he did not. This, despite her "stunt journalism" description of his *Daily Sketch* exploit in persuading the then raw reporter Anthea Disney to dye her skin

## A watchdog for Europe

### Raymond Snoddy on a new guardian of press freedom

FREIMUT DUVE's first name is entirely appropriate for his new task. In German, Freimut means "frankness, openness, honesty" and he has taken on the Herculean job of trying to ensure that the media in 54 European states has the freedom to be open and honest.

Herr Duve has been appointed to the new post of representative on freedom of the media to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. He has no doubt there is plenty of work to do. "We have member states where journalists are in prison, where there is direct repression," says Herr Duve, whose primary focus will be on the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe. But he says he will also be looking at the impact of what he calls "the industrialisation of the First Amendment" in the Western European democracies — the creation of large media conglomerates with interests across a variety of media.



Freimut Duve

with some of the accusations of abuse that emerged from a European Union meeting in Warsaw, Poland, last November.

The EU, for example, is concerned about serious infringements of freedom of expression in Belarus, where an independent radio station was closed down. There is also concern that attacks on ethnic groups will hinder reconciliation in Croatia and that more than 70 journalists are in jail in Turkey.

Herr Duve does not have the resources to mount investigations of abuses, nor can he monitor all the media in 54 countries. He will have to rely on abuse being drawn to his attention by journalists in the countries concerned. Then he will be able to raise the issue directly.

"I think all the governments and countries concerned have voted for my office," says Herr Duve, who was in London last week for meetings which included talks with Chris Smith, the Minister for Culture, Media and Sport.

He hopes that when he intervenes on a press freedom issue the fact of his action, and attendant publicity, will persuade transgressors to give "second thoughts to the issue". On the subject of the industrialisation of the Western media, Herr Duve wants, above all else, to try to ensure that amid huge commercial interests space is reserved for serious journalism.

He would like to establish a small foundation to look into the problems the "twins of democracy and journalism" will face in the next century. Ask him whether his job is close to impossible and he replies: "I am a fan of Sisyphus. He kept pushing the stone up the hill."

Unlike Sisyphus, the representative on freedom of the media hopes the stone will not roll all the way down to the bottom of the hill again.

You have to be fearless and hungry to stay alive there

## Oscar performance by VW

THE British Television Advertising Awards — adland's equivalent of the Oscars — took place on Wednesday night at London's Grosvenor House Hotel. Unsurprisingly, Volkswagen took both the best overall campaign and best individual commercial prizes with its "affordability" and Polo work.

Perhaps more extraordinary than the achievement was the lack of controversy around the awards from the notoriously bitchy London advertising community. VW's ads have, it seems, won the approval both of consumers and the ad industry, and have kept the marketing director, Nigel Brotherton, happy by increasing VW's market share.

What helps to make the work special is the degree of difficulty involved in VW's brief to its agency, BMP DDB. Briefly, it was to build on the "if only everything in life was as reliable as a Volkswagen" advertising, and to persuade consumers that VWs do not cost as much as they might think.

Essentially, it is a price brief, and we can all bear witness to the awful advertising that so often results. But BMP's simple creative idea was to feature the price of cars such as the Polo on poster and bus-side advertising and to show the reactions of passers-by, such as a woman fainting in the street or a man walking into a lamp-post.

My current favourite is the guardsman on sentry duty who resists the distraction of assorted tourists, but whose eyes follow a bus promoting the price of a Polo. Possibly the subtlest advertising on TV, it avoids the trap of being clever-clever.

That the ads won is also symbolic of a style shift away from the epic, technique-obsessed ads of the late Eighties and early Nineties to simpler — and cheaper — commercials. You might call it a return of the idea, and the style seems certain to spawn imitators — not least



because since 1994 VW's total UK market share has risen from 3.9 per cent to 6.3 per cent.

THE American media press is full of General Motors' decision to cut its \$500 million annual spend in magazines, where it is the largest advertiser. It is disturbed by what it believes to be a lack of acceptable research evidence to prove its ads work, and has decided to switch more of its budget to television.

The impact will be felt among generalist titles because GM is worried that it is not targeting prospective customers precisely. It is also cutting back on advertising spreads and inserts in favour of single-page ads.

Chrysler is considering a similar move, so American publishers must be concerned. Even a 10 per cent spend cut by VW would cost them \$50 million.

Yanahall insists there are no plans to follow suit in the UK, where it spends up to £30 million in newspapers and magazines. But the UK industry is alert to the need for research on effectiveness. The Periodical Publishers Association has commissioned a major survey on

the quality of readerships. Results are due this month. Nevertheless, some agencies believe the quest for incontrovertible proof of advertising effectiveness is futile. However, as marketing directors come under ever greater internal pressure to justify their ad budgets, this position seems increasingly untenable.

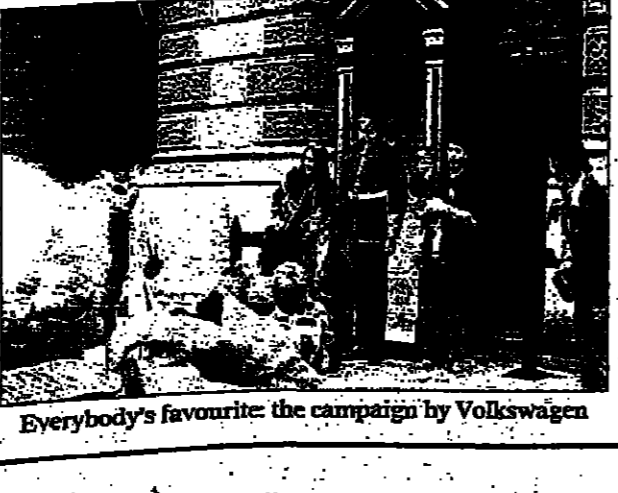
To ask someone to spend millions of pounds on an advertising campaign and then suggest that not only is there no guarantee it will work but that it is not possible to prove whether it has worked or not appears indefensible.

ONE OF British advertisers' biggest concerns is the huge relative cost of UK television advertising airtime inflation. So, as the TV advertising sales and buying communities hold their annual conference in Barcelona, you might expect the issue to head the agenda.

You'd be wrong. Despite commercial TV airtime costs increasing by an average 41.3 per cent against RPI of 11.7 per cent between 1993 and 1997, the focus will be elsewhere — on European regulation and digital TV. Even the annual sport of beating up ITV is likely to be tame. This is partly because of the honeymoon period still being enjoyed by the ITV Network Centre's chief executive, Richard Eyre, and partly because of the relative lack of big advertisers in attendance.

They vented their frustration at their own conference in London last week. Unilever's Michael Hebel echoed the words of Procter & Gamble's Paul Polman at the same event last year. Commercial television, he complained, is not making inroads against the BBC's audience despite the explosion in channels. TV airtime inflation, he argued, is out of control and making it harder for companies like his to develop new products in Britain.

Stefano Hatfield is editor of Campaign.



Everybody's favourite: the campaign by Volkswagen

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Media Times

# Is the BBC too mean to work with any more?

**B**y any standards, Brian Lapping is a successful maker of television programmes. The documentaries on contemporary history made by Brook Lapping, his company, command primetime slots. They win awards, gain plaudits and sell all over the world.

Yet the way the television networks do business is skewed against independent producers of his stamp. His heavily trailed six-part documentary on the Arab-Israeli conflict starts on Sunday. It has run up a loss of £450,000 and driven his company to the brink of financial disaster.

The relationship between the BBC and independent producers, Mr Lapping says, "is like that of a Bond Street fashion house and women in the suburbs sewing nighties. We're outworkers. Each time we've made a series for the BBC [they include *The Death of Yugoslavia* and *The Second Russian Revolution*] it has paid less and less in terms of percentage of the budget. With this one, I've reached the end of the road."

One of the ironies in this cautionary tale is that the idea for the series came not from Mr Lapping but from the BBC. Just before *The Death of Yugoslavia* was transmitted in 1995, Michael Jackson, then head of BBC2, summoned him to discuss his next project. Mr Lapping went armed with a number of ideas suitable for his company's distinctive documentary style of tracing and interviewing witnesses to historic events. Mr Jackson instead proposed a new examination of Israel's relationship with the Arabs in its 50 years as a nation. He had been reading about the work of young Israeli "revisionist" historians, who questioned some of the traditional assumptions about their country's formative years.

Mr Lapping accepted the idea in principle, then went to see the

The future of independent television documentaries is under threat from budget cuts, says **Michael Leapman**

holders of the purse strings at the BBC's documentaries department to discuss how it could be funded. He was told to see what he could raise from co-producers in other countries. Not until he reported back would the BBC decide on its contribution. The only firm commitment at that point was to fund at least 25 per cent of the budget.

This refusal to make a specific offer upfront means that the BBC holds all the aces and takes hardly any risk. If the independent producer succeeds in raising a substantial amount of co-production money, then the BBC — the originator of the commission — gets its series at a bargain rate.

The sensitive subject matter of the documentary made funding a problem. In America, Mr Lapping was turned down by the first company he approached. He was told: "You will be saying things that American Zionists won't like. We don't want to get our windows broken."

However, WGBH, the public broadcasting station in Boston, offered £600,000, about a quarter of the estimated budget. Broadcasters in Japan, The Netherlands, Australia and Scandinavia also chipped in, but to a lesser extent.

Mr Lapping reported his progress to the BBC. In the light of it, the BBC offered to underwrite 35 per cent of the budget for the series. This left a 20 per cent gap between

the funding and the projected cost. Despite his best efforts, Mr Lapping made no further significant sales. Now he had to make a decision. "In principle you should raise the money before you make the series," he concedes. "In practice, it is difficult. If you have a powerful broadcaster behind you, who is putting up a large sum of money and wants you to get on with it, and another large broadcaster comes along, making it up to 70 per cent, what do you do? Do you tell them you can't make it, or make a start and hope that the rest comes in?"

I went back to the BBC and asked if it could raise its figure. It said no but we decided to take a chance. So we went into production knowing that we had a deficit.

A similar calamity over *The Death of Yugoslavia* was averted only because tension on the ground in Bosnia escalated just before transmission, persuading several overseas stations to buy in at a late stage. A sudden Middle East crisis may now be the only chance of erasing the deficit hanging over Mr Lapping's project. Although the BBC is funding only a third, its watchdogs still keep a close eye on Mr Lapping's costs and practices.

"They tell us how many days' shooting we are allowed, what sort of film stock to use and how much to pay. They ask why we cannot get bargain air fares and go through the budget in detail. When I ask them why they behave in that way, they say: 'Because this is the way we behave.'"

Mr Lapping is philosophical about his difficulties. "I'm a licensee-payer. I want the BBC to buy programmes economically. I've reported my problems to them and I hope they'll help me out. Mark Thompson [the head of BBC2] has said he will see what he can do. But



Under threat... glimpses of history, such as this briefing of President Nasser by the Egyptian diplomat Abdel Raham Sadeq

it's a worry. My finance director is white-knuckled."

The difficulties can be blamed on the hard-line business-school culture that has infected the BBC since John Birt became Director-General in 1993. Armies of accountants have clamped down on programme budgets in the name of efficiency.

The effect of this on the morale of BBC staff has been well documented but independent producers, wary of offending their paymasters, have made less of a

fuss. Yet it is surely a scandal that they have to prostrate themselves before the panjandrums at Television Centre to stay in business.

Serious documentaries are a buyers' market. Channel 4 is the only other player, and its practices are scarcely more producer-friendly. Even if the BBC drops more coins into Mr Lapping's begging bowl, he will make no profit from the series. He wonders whether his kind of television can survive.

Last year, to stem costs, he

merged his old company, Brian Lapping Associates (the former producers of BBC's *Question Time*) with Brook Productions (Channel 4's *A Week in Politics*), of which his wife Ann was a director.

"The trouble is that both companies have made the programmes they wanted to make and haven't run it as a business, as this episode demonstrates," he admits. "We continued to make high-quality programmes without being concerned with money. The market for

our sort of programmes is not expanding. We're dinosaurs left over from the public service ethos — he pauses and smiles — "although we're happy dinosaurs."

But today happiness will get you nowhere. Dedicated professionals are being forced to play by the BBC's rules or find another way of earning a living. Someone should make a documentary about it.

● The 50 Years War: Israel and the Arabs produced by Norman Perry (Sunday; BBC2, 8.10pm).

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Reference: 2386

**International Marketing Consultant**

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- Provide strategic leadership to local managers to ensure retail brand delivery.
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- Guide local tactical campaigns and promote best practice.
- Review and co-ordinate new market entry plans.
- Provide consultancy services to country managers and maintain crucial liaison with product originators and other suppliers.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- Graduate calibre, ideally with 10 years experience gained in retail, entertainment or FMCG development.
- Exceptional communication skills with proven leadership abilities.
- Responsive to an international, multi-cultural business environment.
- Commercially mature with experience of significant project management.

Reference: 2380

Given the geographical range of the business, both roles will require some travel and candidates with language skills will be of particular interest.

Candidates interested in these outstanding opportunities should write, enclosing full career details including current remuneration and the appropriate reference number, to Richard Wilson, Consumer Division, Questor International Ltd, 3 Burlington Gardens, London W1X 1LE. Tel: 0171 292 8300. Fax 0171 287 5457 e-mail: gw@questorint.com

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BARINGS PLC (IN LIQUIDATION) AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES Proposed implementation of conciliation plan

The joint liquidators of Barings PLC ("PLC") announce that they are in the process of implementing a conciliation plan relating to PLC and its subsidiaries proposed by the City Disputes Panel (the "CDP Plan").

Payments to investors in the Notes: Under the CDP Plan, investors in the three note issues (the "Notes") made by PLC and its Dutch finance subsidiary, Barings BV ("BV"), are expected to receive the following amounts: US\$150 million Floating Rate Notes issued in 1994 by BV, guaranteed by PLC (the "1994 Notes");

US\$150 million Floating Rate Capital Notes issued in 1986 by BV, guaranteed by PLC (the "1986 Notes");

£100 million Perpetual Subordinated Notes issued in 1994 by PLC (the "Perpetual Notes");

Any assets over and above the amounts required to make the initial payments referred to above which become available for distribution by PLC to investors will be applied as to the first £2 million to the 1986 Notes and thereafter will be shared in the ratio 58.5:25.5 between the 1986 Notes and the Perpetual Notes.

Two stage implementation: The CDP Plan will be implemented in two stages. At stage one, which is now in progress, payments will be made on the 1994 Notes. Implementation of stage one is conditional, among other things, on the passing of an extraordinary resolution of holders of the 1994 Notes approving the terms of stage one and delivery by investors in not less than 83% of the 1994 Notes by principal amount of the undertakings and releases described below.

At stage two, payments will be made on the 1986 Notes and Perpetual Notes. Implementation of stage two requires meetings of holders of the 1986 Notes and Perpetual Notes (as for these Notes there is no procedure for passing written resolutions) and also meetings of creditors under a scheme of arrangement.

Pre-condition for payment to investors in the Notes: Under the CDP Plan, payments to creditors will be funded in part from the assets of PLC and its subsidiaries and in part from contributions to be made by third parties as described below. It is a requirement of the contributing parties that investors undertake not to pursue and to release any claims which they may have for alleged losses suffered as a result of investing in the Notes.

Sources of funds: The funds required at stage one to make payments on the 1994 Notes will come from the early repayment of part of a loan made by BV to a company which is now a subsidiary of ING Groep N.V. ("ING") and from other funds which are currently held by BV.

Settlement of disputes involving BV: The trustees for the 1986 and 1994 Notes, PLC, BV and its Dutch curator (liquidator) have recently entered into an agreement under which a number of disputes between them have been resolved, including the issue of whether or not, under their terms, the 1986 Notes have ceased to be an obligation of BV.

Settlement of claims against auditors: PLC and certain of its subsidiaries have commenced litigation against their auditors alleging negligence in which substantial claims are made. The second stage of the implementation of the CDP Plan will involve the settlement of these claims, which will require approval from English and foreign courts.

Settlement of claims made by investors in the Perpetual Notes: Claims have been made by a number of plaintiffs claiming to be investors in Perpetual Notes against PLC and its subsidiary Bishopscourt (BB&Co) Limited ("BB&Co") (formerly known as Baring Brothers & Co., Limited, the group's bank). These claims are in respect of alleged misrepresentations and/or omissions in the listing particulars contained in the offering memorandum relating to the Perpetual Notes.

Withdrawal of allegations against the lead manager of the 1986 Notes: Certain investors in the 1986 Notes have made allegations that the lead manager of the 1986 Notes is liable to investors in relation to alleged defects in the structuring of the 1986 and 1994 Notes.

Meetings of noteholders and creditors: Separate meetings of the holders of the 1986 Notes and the Perpetual Notes will be required to approve stage two of the CDP Plan. Notices convening these meetings, which are not expected to be held before May 1998, will be published at a later date and an explanatory statement will be circulated.

Shareholders: The liquidators of PLC have been authorised by the English court to proceed towards the implementation of the CDP Plan. Implementation is supported by representative investors in all three issues of Notes and others who participated in the negotiations and discussions which resulted in the CDP Plan.

Record time for investors in Perpetual Notes: In respect of the Perpetual Notes only, the information which each investor in Perpetual Notes will be required to give to the liquidators in order to obtain payment will extend to details of any increase or decrease in his interest in Perpetual Notes after 6.00 p.m. London time on 12th March, 1998 (the "Record Time").

All arrangements to compromise any of the litigation referred to above are conditional upon the CDP Plan being implemented and are without prejudice to the litigation, with the exception of those disputes referred to under "Settlement of disputes involving BV".

By: Nigel James Hamilton, Alan Robert Bloom and Margaret Elizabeth Mills, partners in Ernst & Young, without personal liability as joint liquidators of Barings PLC Date: 13th March, 1998 Enquiries: Ernst & Young (Stephen Harris or Vivienne Oliver) on 0171 931 4327

APPENDIX

- 1. Requirements in respect of 1994 Notes, 1986 Notes and Perpetual Notes In order to obtain payment, an investor in Notes will be required to provide (among other matters) the following to the liquidators: (a) (i) Information about each acquisition of Notes, in particular the date and the nominal value of Notes involved; (ii) confirmation that each acquisition was made as principal; (iii) if the Notes are held through Euroclear or Cedel Bank, particulars of the account holder at Euroclear or Cedel Bank in whose books the Notes are recorded; and (iv) if there are any intermediaries such as nominee companies, investment managers, stockbrokers or others through whom the holder traces his interest in Notes, particulars of those intermediaries. (b) (i) An undertaking not to take any step or proceeding or make or assert any claim against, among others, PLC, ING, third parties contributing funds to the settlement and their affiliates, or any person entitled to join any of the foregoing in any such step or proceeding, in respect of any loss or damage suffered or incurred as a result of investing in the Notes; and (ii) a release of any such claim which that investor possesses or may possess. 2. Additional requirements for Perpetual Notes In order to obtain payment, an investor in Perpetual Notes will be required, in addition to the requirements described in paragraph 1, to provide (among other matters) the following to the liquidators in respect of changes since the Record Time in the nominal value of Perpetual Notes in respect of which an interest is claimed: (i) information about each acquisition, in particular the date, the former investor in the Perpetual Notes he acquired from and the nominal value of Perpetual Notes involved; and (ii) the requirements in paragraph 1 above from each former investor he acquired from (and from any other investor who had an interest in the relevant Perpetual Notes at or after the Record Time). Insofar as he has disposed of part of this interest in Perpetual Notes since the Record Time, he must provide details about his disposal, including the date, the person he sold to and the nominal value of Perpetual Notes involved.

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE... THE INDEMNITY ACT 1986... NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a MEETING of the CREDITORS of the above named Company will be held on 21st March 1998 at 11.00 am at 25th March 1998 at the Old Bailey, London EC4A 3DF, for the purpose of the said Act...

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985... NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice in the above matter, made on 18 February 1998, confirming the appointment of the liquidator of the above named Company, is hereby confirmed and the liquidation of the Company is hereby confirmed...

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Interested individuals are invited to obtain particulars from the Personnel Unit, telephone 01204 903579 (answer-phone) or e-mail b.cain@bolton.ac.uk by not later than Friday 27th March, quoting reference Dir/1. The closing date for applications will be Friday 17th April. Selection events will be held at the Institute on Wednesday 6th May (interim) and 20th/21st May (final).

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**Database and Internet Site Development:** this post will carry out many of the key dissemination tasks of the project. You should have a significant background in IT, especially Internet development and database design. Knowledge and experience of manufacturing industry will be an advantage. Further details from Dr. Andrew Williamson, (01234) 750111 x 2296, Ref. No. 8042A.

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## POSTS



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## POSTS

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The successful applicant must have a proven record at senior management level with a formal accountancy qualification or equivalent experience, be computer literate and a good communicator, have a sound knowledge of personnel matters and be capable of strategic planning.

Inquiries for further details and an application form should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors, Royal Grammar School, High Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3BE. Tel. no: 01483 539880.

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MOTOR RACING: BRITON RELISHES CHALLENGE OF COMPETING IN THE UNITED STATES

Blundell promises a fight to the finish

By Kevin Eason

MARK BLUNDELL spent four seasons in Formula One but barely had the chance to race. On Sunday he faces a frantic scrap to get off to a winning start in the new IndyCar season in the United States.

The contrast between the no-holds-barred competition of IndyCars, now known as Champ Cars, and the near pre-determined outcome of Formula One races dominated by a handful of rich teams grates with the former McLaren driver.

Watching the outcome of the pre-race pact between Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard in the Australian Grand Prix last weekend convinced Ferrari have offered Michael Schumacher an extra £52 million to stay with the team for the rest of his career.

Blundell that he is fortunate to be out of Formula One and racing in the United States, where winning is what matters. Blundell begins a gruelling 19-race campaign that he reckons is the most competitive in world motor racing this weekend in Miami.



Blundell celebrates winning the Toronto IndyCar race in July last year, his second career victory in the series

to show his talent in a successful team. "The car was pretty difficult when I was at McLaren," he said, "but it is always a struggle against the big teams in Formula One who have the money to develop the cars and dominate. If you are in a team at the back of the grid, there isn't much chance to challenge."

"I don't miss Formula One," Blundell said, "and I certainly don't miss the politics in Formula One. Here we just race to win." After a frustrating start to last season with a fretful and unreliable PacWest Reynard-Mercedes, Blundell produced a storming finish with three victories — and signs that his title chances could be consolidated this season.

HOCKEY

Crutchley ready to return for Cannock

By Sydney Friskin

BOB CRUTCHLEY, whose injury problems forced him to pull out of England's recent trip to Malaysia, has a reasonable chance of playing for Cannock in two important matches this weekend.

The torn ligaments in Crutchley's right ankle have healed sufficiently to enable him to play, according to Martin Gilbody, the team manager. He emphasised that six Cannock players were with the England team in Malaysia.

Canterbury, by contrast, have been under no pressure since they defeated Southgate 3-2 at Polo Farm on February 22. They travel to relegation-threatened Barford Tigers tomorrow before their meeting with Cannock.

There are two crucial relegation battles in the first division this weekend, with Blueharts travelling to Hull and St Albans at home to Gloucester City.

There are plenty of good drivers and teams," Blundell said. "It will be close and what the spectators know is that it will be a scrap. There will be no moving over or team orders in the first race of the season. It will be a race."

Western's loss is Slough's gain

By Cathy Harris

SUE MACDONALD, the Scotland and Great Britain striker, hopes to crown a highly successful debut season with Slough, the women's National League premier division champions, by finishing as the league's leading goalscorer.

Nineteen league goals in 13 matches represents an excellent return and MacDonald believes that it goes a long way to answering the criticism of the poor standard of Scottish hockey.

MacDonald's scoring rate is almost one goal in every other game of her 113 Scotland and Great Britain appearances.

MacDonald also is optimistic that Slough can become the first British women's team to win the European club championship, which is being held in London at Easter.

"We've still got a lot of work to do and there are times when we haven't fired on all cylinders this season, but we definitely possess the quality players in the squad," she said.

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HOCKEY  
Western loss is Slough's gain  
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RACING: CROWD GATHERS IN SEARCH OF INGREDIENTS FOR PROFITABLE CHELTENHAM VISIT

Irish seek recipe for Festival success

FROM CHRIS McGRATH IN FERMOY

TO GET a horse right for Cheltenham is a delicate balancing act. Never are these nervous performers so vulnerable as when brought brimming with confidence, their training programme is over. Once invested with confidence, it becomes a matter of keeping them taut yet springy.

Trainers talk about their charges coming to the boil, of not wanting to "overcook" them. Horney notices these and likewise the "pipe-opener". This is the light exercise undertaken, just prior to race day, by a horse already conditioned to its optimum. It scrapes the froth off the pot.

To get an Irishman right for Cheltenham can also be a balancing act. All racegoers struggle for equilibrium during their giddy nights in the Cotswolds. Nonetheless, the

RICHARD EVANS

**Nap: Nearly An Eye (25 Sandown Park)**  
Nearly An Eye, formerly a smart point-to-point, overcame a three-month absence to win at Kempton recently, and looks likely to repeat this feat when he returns to the form book at Sandown Park.

**Next best: Abdallah (200 Sandown Park)**  
Irish horses will be the very devil to beat on that hill, if they are even half as ready as their supporters.

On Wednesday night, some 600 of them gathered on the banks of the blackwater, in Co Cork, for a collective pipe-opener. They were so crammed into the ballroom of the Grand Hotel in Fermoy that the sound of the music was standing - some only - as though still waiting, still yearning, for a partner at the hunt ball.

They were yearning, all right. This had been billed as "The Ultimate Cheltenham Preview" by the organisers, the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association. On a platform, facing the eager throng, sat some of those who hold custody of their dreams next week - Michael Hourigan, trainer of Doran's Pride, favourite for the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup itself. Mouse Morris, who saddles His Song, the keynote Irish banker, in the first race of the meeting, the Ciaran Supreme Novices Hurdle. Edward O'Grady, Jessica Harrington, and Tom Teaffe.

Some yearning, some poignant want of fulfilment, is at



The packed audience listens intently as the panelists, including Osborne, centre, make their predictions for next week's Cheltenham Festival

the heart of Ireland's complex identity. Looking at her troubled history, some consider it to be at the heart of a downright identity complex. Either way, Cheltenham is a precious occasion, as it allows the Irish to travel with might and power - not just the anguished bravado of their rugby players in Paris last Saturday. This will not be the sporting equivalent of rustling a few cattle. There is legitimate talk of a record, of eight

wins or more. Really, the place could be overrun. There was duly no sense of frivolity in Fermoy. Whatever the carousing next week, this was not the prelude to some reckless, pointless binge. They sat in rows, earnestly absorbing hints and hearsay, scribbling in their programmes. For three hours, the bar was virtually ignored. Instead, they watched the films, rapt as though in communal worship. Florida Pearl, Istabraq, Ele-

gant Lord. They might have been in church. The sermon, though, had plenty of gags. There were roars of appreciation every time a panelist ventured a crack, disproportionate roars expressive of an underlying tension - notably regarding Jamie Osborne, the panel's star performer. Osborne has curiosity value just now, after his arrest - and release without charge - by police investigating allegations of doping and race fixing.

Lord in the Christies Foxhunters' Chase and Paddy's Return in the BonusPrint Stayers' Hurdle.

There was also some potentially productive scepticism. Morris pinned a financial health warning to Florida Pearl in the Royal & SunAlliance Chase. "I just wonder if he has too much foot to go on that hill," Morris said.

A Delphic observation to even save, ordinary citizens, uninitiated 600 zealots. O'Grady agreed that "only a lunatic would back him at the odds". Morris said that His Song was also "a terrific price".

Sunny Bay has workout at Sandown

CHARLIE BROOKS will make a decision over Sunny Bay's participation in next Thursday's Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup after the grey has worked at Sandown on Saturday. The Lambourn trainer said that the racecourse exercise will also give the public the chance to assess the nine-year-old's wellbeing five days before the big race. Brooks will give Sunny Bay, an 8-1 chance for the Gold Cup with Ladbrokes, a workout with stable companion

Champion Hurdle. However, Ferdn Murphy has withdrawn French Holly to aim his unbeaten hurdler at the five-furlong longer Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Hurdle on Wednesday. The £200,000-added race on Tuesday could be set for its largest field in several years after 22 horses were left in the event at yesterday's five-day declaration stage. No field bigger than 18 has lined up for the two-mile contest since 24 went to post in 1991. Coral has set Istabraq to lead from 11-4 and Data Star from 8-1 to 5-1 for the big race.

Obviously, they will be backed regardless. And what of the Weatherbys Champion Bumper? Dependably, the bumper pays your fare home. "I was speaking to Christy Roche at the weekend," Taaffe confided. "I've never heard him so confident about a horse." Joe Mac, its name is. Keep it under your hat, mind. Only Taaffe knows, and one or two laid who ran into him in Fermoy the other night.

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2.25 KANSAS HANDICAP CHASE  
3.00 WHEATLEY PACKAGING JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE  
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3.30 LINCOLNSHIRE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY HANDICAP HURDLE  
4.05 WHEATLEY PACKAGING NOVICES CHASE  
4.40 BEAUMONTCOTE HUNTERS CHASE  
5.10 FARMERS STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE

AYR  
2.10 The Client, 2.45 Welsh March, 3.20 Birtchdale, 3.55 Jymjam Johnny, 4.25 Howsman, 5.00 Point Duty  
2.10 LICH DON NATIONAL HUNT MAIDEN HURDLE  
2.45 ROYAL HIGHLAND FUSILIERS NOVICES CHASE

3.55 ARTHUR CHALLENGE CUP  
4.25 AYSHIRE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION HUNTERS CUP  
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2.00 BUSBY PARK NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE  
2.35 WORCESTER PARK NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE  
3.10 HORSE & HOUND GRAND MILITARY GOLD CUP  
3.45 RACAL NOVICES HURDLE  
4.15 DUKE OF GLOUCESTER MEMORIAL HUNTERS CHASE  
4.50 SURREY RACING HANDICAP HURDLE  
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FOOTBALL

Middlesbrough in strong position to sign Gascoigne

MIDDLESBROUGH are attempting to sign Paul Gascoigne, the Rangers and England midfielder, on loan until the end of the season...

Crystal Palace first alerted the market that Gascoigne was available when Mark Goldberg, the club's prospective new owner, agreed a £3 million fee with Rangers last week...

that Adebola, as a British passport-holder, is qualified to play for any of the four home nations. Adebola, 22, who has scored five goals in seven games for Birmingham since a £1 million move from Crewe Alexandra...

Adebola: Irish call-up

Arsenal back in title business

WHEN the bookmakers form a huddle and readjust their odds, it is a fair bet that something is afoot. So it transpired on Wednesday evening...

Sean Boyce, of Ladbrokes, said: "We thought that the Fat Lady had already sung but it appears she was only clearing her throat..."

manager, said. United's morning match against Arsenal at Old Trafford tomorrow has taken on greater significance after Arsenal's 1-0 victory...

Haynes' road to fame faces closure

Rob Hughes hails the fiftieth anniversary of one of Wembley's most auspicious debuts



Haynes in his pomp as Britain's most highly-paid player and mainspring of England

The wheel of England's national game turns full circle tomorrow when Johnny Haynes, the star of the first schoolboy international at Wembley Stadium in 1950...

lowered turf. "Do the kids relate to my day?" Haynes asked, repeating the question. "I doubt it." "In speed and stamina the game is much better and quicker today, but the passing leaves a lot to be desired..."

So, why is the Wembley fixture threatened? First and foremost, of course, the old stadium is about to be pulled down before it falls, and yesterday's news is that it might be resurrected as Arsenal's, rather than the Football Association's, home...

Rather, the under-15 international is subject to the changing philosophy of Lancaster Gate. Howard Wilkinson, who heads the FA Technical Control Board, is developing a Charter for Quality that puts the emphasis on more festive and tournament football than one-off prestige friendlies...

Mills hopes for cup glory with a difference

By Walter Gammie

HALF a lifetime ago, at the age of 18, Gary Mills won a European Cup winners' medal with Nottingham Forest. Tomorrow, revelling in his first job in management, he will be seeking to take Grantham Town a step closer to an appearance in the FA Umbro Trophy final at Wembley.

Forced by a severe hamstring injury to end his professional career at Notts County 18 months ago, Mills received the call from Grantham to replace John Barnwell, who had become chief executive of the Managers' Association. Barnwell had begun the task of pulling up a club that in 1995 avoided dropping into the United Counties League only because Wealdstone switched to the Isthmian League.

FOR THE RECORD

Table with multiple columns listing sports events, results, and records across various categories like Athletics, Badminton, Bowls, Cricket, Football, Golf, Hockey, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, and Snow Reports.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT. As I constantly say, when you are the declarer you should make a plan before playing from dummy at trick one. The defenders do not have that privilege...

KEENE on CHESS

By Raymond Keene, CHESS CORRESPONDENT. Shiroy's success. One of the least expected outcomes of the elite tournament at Linares in Spain was the second prize won by the former Latvian (now Spanish) grandmaster Alexei Shiroy...

WINNING MOVE

Chess board diagram showing a winning move. Includes text: "White to play. This position is from the game Soffer - Oratovsky, Israel 1998. This position shows the danger of falling behind in development. Black's position seems solid, but White has a crushing breakthrough. Can you see it?"

SNOW REPORTS section with a table showing snow conditions for various regions like Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK.

FIXTURES section listing upcoming matches for Football, Rugby Union, and Badminton.

WORD WATCHING section with a list of words and their definitions, including terms like 'SAMLOR', 'PANGA', and 'ROSEMALING'.

WINNING MOVE section with a chess board diagram and text explaining a winning move in a game between Soffer and Oratovsky.





# SPORT

GOLF 50

Colin Montgomerie's brave face against hostility in America



## MOTOR RACING 46

Why Mark Blundell has no regrets about leaving Formula One



FRIDAY MARCH 13 1998

West Indies take stranglehold on fifth Test match against England

# Ramprakash firm amid wreckage

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

THEY had come in unprecedented thousands until every room on this island was occupied and every bar filled with the sounds of their optimism. They had come believing in a cricketing miracle, because many of them had witnessed one here four years ago. It took England only two hours, one devastating session, to disillusion them.

day that drew an indelible line under Michael Atherton's time in the chamber of horrors that has been the England captaincy, and of all the moments for his kingdom to collapse, few could be more poignant than a Barbados morning with Kensington Oval full of partisan England followers.

There was cause, even for the neutral, to believe that England could prosper here. It was not just the memory of the

selected and executed. His feet remained inside the line, he had no element of control and, as the ball arched obligingly to Ambrose at long leg, Atherton retreated with hangdog remorse.

The captain has been confident in his form, but this was a self-inflicted dismissal, personally crushing in its timing. It left Atherton with 107 runs from eight Test innings here. It left England at 24 for two.

One run earlier, while the last of the pink-faced tourists were still transferring the banners that have hung from their beach-front balconies onto the rails and fences of this adopted piece of England, the worst blow of all had been received in silence.

Alec Stewart perished to overconfidence, his fluent form and his love of this ground conspiring to produce an air of inviolability and a needless flick at a ball from Walsh that bounced steeply outside off stump.

If both these wickets should have been avoided, that of Nasser Hussain was the most alarming. In the Guyana Test, he was out when taking his eye off a short ball. Isolated lapse or damaging habit? The latter may be true, for he survived one similar scare here before a ball, dug in short and fast from McLean, saw his head jerk back again and the ball deflected to slip off a dangling bat.

This was endorsement for the inclusion of McLean ahead of Ramnarine, who had stood to become the first specialist slow bowler chosen by West Indies on this ground since David Holford in 1976. The reversion to four pace bowlers completed a remarkable four changes from the team that won convincingly in



Walsh: jubilant

1994 victory, but the knowledge that the pitch and the atmosphere should suit them and that this West Indies team is not a patch on its predecessors. In no time, however, England had painted them as forbiddingly as the tyrants of old.

Atherton himself was culpable. It was one thing to be positive on a pitch of pace and bounce, quite another to be headstrong. Atherton's hook at Walsh was a shot poorly



Atherton helps a ball from Walsh to long leg, where Ambrose held the catch to dismiss the England captain

## Lottery key as Arsenal bid to buy Wembley

By Russell Kempson

ARSENAL'S offer to purchase Wembley Stadium, though audacious and adventurous, will probably end in failure. Wembley plc, the stadium owner, is more likely to accept the initial bid lodged by the English National Stadium Trust when it announces its decision at the end of the month.

Paramount among Wembley plc's considerations is that funding from the National Lottery for the redevelopment of the stadium will not be available if it is owned by a private company, thus lessening Arsenal's chances of success. Also, the Football Association, in pursuing its aim of staging the 2006 World Cup finals, has forged close links with the Trust.

"We have worked immensely hard with the Trust on the proposal to buy Wembley with Lottery money," David Davies, the FA's head of external affairs, said yesterday. "It is now up to the Wembley board to make up its mind on whether to take two bids."

"A deadline of March 31 has been set by the English Sports Council [which administers the Lottery money] and we hope for a speedy resolution in everybody's interest."

Arsenal have been consistently blocked from expanding the 25,000 capacity of Highbury by resistance from Islington Council and local residents. The offer for Wembley is seen more as an attempt to exert further pressure on the council than a genuine attempt to buy the "Venue of Legends".

In Arsenal's favour, their bid, believed to be £120 million, is higher than that from the Trust, which offered £90 million. Fifa, football's world governing body, has said also that, if the stadium was owned by an individual club, it would not affect England's hopes of hosting the World Cup finals.

With the Government supporting the bid from the Trust, it would be politically embarrassing if it were to lose to Arsenal. Martin Corrie, a spokesman for Wembley plc, said: "There are a lot of elements to consider. We are committed to the national stadium but, at the same time, we are committed to our shareholders. We will see what develops."

Wanted man, page 49

By the time that Russell fell to Carl Hooper, after his first significant innings of the tour, Ramprakash was set for his second half-century in successive Tests and England had averted humiliation. On a day when the game back home was suffering embarrassment on a grand scale, this was some consolation. However, it was a different matter entirely to win, as they must, after such a woeful start.

### BRIDGETOWN SCOREBOARD

Table with columns for West Indies won loss, England First Innings, and various player statistics including runs, wickets, and overs.

### TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

- ACROSS: 1 Think darkly: set of off-spring (5); 4 Tiniest discrete amount: a theory (7); 8 Indefensibly unfair (13); 9 Squinting: awry (8); 10 Limbs: bingo "eleven" (4); 12 Dried grape (6); 13 Alcohol: water (for beer-making) (6); 16 Cousin's mum (4); 17 Not equally balanced (8); 20 Israeli farm conative (7); 21 In the vicinity: a pub (5); 22 Damage beyond repair (5); 23 Ireland such an isle (7); DOWN: 1 Doorman: head-high ball (7); 2 Arousing complaint (13); 3 Reading disorder (8); 4 Arrow holder (6); 5 Grewdy (4); 6 Dramatic scene: frozen stage action (7); 7 Satisfies: is introduced to (5); 11 Mix into water (8); 14 Coloured red: unkempt (7); 15 Spout on hose (6); 16 Out of true (5); 18 Russian country cottage (5); 19 Chinese boat: lumber (4); SOLUTION TO NO 1351: ACROSS: 4 Drive 7 Thatcher 8 Hook 9 Rousseau 10 Glance 13 Famine 14 Prefer 15 Heath 18 Stunning 19 Pull 20 Ultimate 21 Sweep DOWN: 1 Stroll 2 Larkin 3 Accrue 4 Dressage 5 Interior 6 Excuse 11 Adequate 12 Cleans up 14 Pisces 15 Haggis 16 Appeal 17 Teller

## Walsh and Ambrose put the obituarists to flight

Michael Henderson marvels anew as two great bowlers dictate to England

IT'S some answer. When, in the dark days before this series began, he was teased from the captain's horse, questions were asked of Walsh's willingness to sustain his Test career. There were doubts, too, about Ambrose: a great bowler but, possibly, footsore and tetchy. He heard the whispers and let it be known: "Let the Englishmen come. I'm ready."

An hour into the Test yesterday morning, a game England have to win, and the touring team were again singing from the Every Brothers songbook: "We're in trouble deep." They were in the soup. Trapped up. Before lunch the game was already far advanced, with four prime wickets lost and Thorpe back in the shed musing a back spasm. It's hard to see a way out.

There was nothing wrong with the pitch. Lara's decision to put England in had nothing to do with its potential for entrapment. The ball went through at a decent pace, as new balls do, but for batsmen who have despaired of ever seeing an even-tempered strip in these parts this patch of grass was a boon.

When Ambrose switched from round to over the wicket shortly before lunch, and had Butcher picked up smartly by Hooper at second slip, it was the 700th wicket the pair had taken, jointly, in a combined partnership of 180 Tests. Now those really are figures to write home about, and if Walsh moves past Malcolm Marshall's West Indies record haul of 376 Test wickets in the next week or two — he needs another eight — he can put his

feet up in retirement as a proud and fulfilled man. He couldn't pick a better place to do it than Barbados, one of the great theatres of the game and the main West Indies citadel. This is where Wes Hall and Charlie Griffith, two of the island's most famous sons, who cut a mighty swath through the world's batsmen, have a stand named in their honour. From Hall and Griffith, through Roberts, Holding, Garner and Marshall, and never forgetting Sobers, who could bowl fairly briskly when the mood took him, West Indies teams have been well-stocked with dangerously fast men for night on 40 years. Unless some of the young turks now pawing the turf measure up to the claims of their admirers, Walsh and Ambrose may well be the last in the line.

When the Australians come here next year, they will surely be Test cricketers in the past tense. Walsh is 35, Ambrose 34. But these masters have defined the difference between these sides, and continue to hold the key to the series.

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